Jan.
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17 Tweedsmuir Ave. E.
Chatham, Ont.

KERSTNUMMER 1969

CALVINIST-CONTACT

CHRISTIAN WEEKLY

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If the apostle Paul were living today and asked for a Christmas greeting he may well have used the words of Ephesians 3:

"I pray that Christ will be more and more in your hearts, living within you as you trust in Him. May your roots go down deep into the soil of God's marvelous love."

An impersonal greeting, such as we find on so many Christmas cards today, would never do for Paul. The impact of Christ in his life was simply too powerful. Wherever Paul went he proclaimed that God's only Son came into our world to carry our burdens: to die for us and LIVE for us!

I understand that in the church of Paul's day Christmas wasn't celebrated as a major event, Easter was much more prominent, because it was at Easter that the NEW LIFE was celebrated.

It seems that Paul would tell us today that it's all right to observe Christmas, but only if the living Christ is in our hearts and that his presence comes through in the kind of lives we live.

This year's Christmas cover shows a shaft of light falling on a manger and a wreath of thorns, from which drops of blood fall. This is symbolic of the life of Jesus of Nazareth.

The drops of blood fertilize the soil from which a plant grows. The plant is radiant, fills the form of a heart and produces fruit. We, the followers of Jesus are like this plant. Sometimes we grow straight and tall, at other times the direction of our lives is dramatically changed to fit God's purpose. In either case, the result is the same: We are NEW creatures, experiencing the kind of life that is not possible without God's love.

I hope that my life and that of my fellow Christians may out-radiate every Christmas light in the world this year . . . for Jesus' sake.

John Knight

Christmas, but who can stand it?

by Louis M. Tamminga

Who doesn't look forward to Christmas? These are troubled times and, somehow, we cherish these days of family-intimacy, or withdrawing from the cruel world for a day or two. There is something about the Christmas days, especially for the children, that no other days of the year can match.

But, of course, not everybody longs for Christmas. There are many people who have no one to spend Christmas with. There are the sales-clerks who must go through a very hectic season. There are also the families who bear the load of sorrow mourning the loss of dear ones. An empty place will show the more painfully at Christmas. Think also of the many broken homes. The pain of separation will be the more bitter at the high-season; especially the children will sense this painfully. And, while we make preparations for wonderful get togethers, there remain the refugee camps in the Near East, filled with hopeless people, in barracks, people and children without a future. Wars continue around Israel and the Arab states, in Viet Nam, and in Nigeria. Hunger and sickness increase in Asia, Africa and South America. For the many millions that walk in darkness there will be no Christmas. December 25th will be another day of struggle, of death and despair. A sobering truth, but reality nevertheless.

There is a deeper dimension still to the hesitation that should mark our ways as we approach Christmas. We say, "of course we want to celebrate the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ . . . how wonderful that He came to His people." But *are we so sure about that?* The prophet Malachi foresaw the Lord's coming in the flesh, and he describes it as a fearsome event. In chapter 3 he says, "Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant . . . *But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth?* for he is like the refiner's fire . . . and he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and purge them as gold and silver . . ."

The setting of these words of Malachi are very relevant to us today. The people of Israel had gone through many hard years. Having spent 70 years in exile in Babylon, only 70,000 of them returned, a motley group of down and out people. Then they started rebuilding the temple. The trowel in one hand, the sword in the other. Their godless neighbours made things miserable for them, their fields lay desolate, their vineyards were infested by wild animals, and there is not enough money to meet the daily needs of life. One day when Malachi inspects the building-site he hears the people wail, "Where is God, why doesn't He appear among us as He promised, why doesn't He judge our enemies, why does the Messiah tarry . . . ?" Those people, you see, longed so much for Christmas. That, they thought, would end all their problems. But Malachi sobers them up. He says, "it is good that you long for the coming of the great Messiah, but watch out, it is a terrible event . . . you may find *that you can't even stand it* . . . that it is too much for you!" Malachi says in effect that the people may get more than they had bargained for, that He will punish the enemy, yes, but that He will begin with His people first. He will judge the House of Israel and only then will He deal with His enemy. Anyone here longing for the judgement to begin with the household of faith? Well, that's what Christmas is all about. The Lord dwells among His people. What a Guest to have in our midst. *Who can stand Christmas?*

We have all come to agree in circles of the Reformed faith that the fundamentalist's picture of a sweet Jesus is an insult to the Revelation of God. That has been stressed among us, and we agreed to consider Christ no longer as a soft-spoken friend of children. O, of course, He is the Lord of Love and He did bless the children, heal the sick and comforted the sorrowing. But He was also, and is, the Lord who chased the money changers out of the temple, who looked at His tormentors in Nazareth and they fell back, as did the soldiers in the garden of Gethesemene. Even at the cross the spectators went through fear when the earth was darkened and the earth quaked. In Revelation He is pictured as having eyes of fire and feet of copper-brass. That we all know and confess. But to experience it, is another thing. To live in the presence of such a Saviour is an awesome thing in itself. This is one of the basic weaknesses of our faith-life. We always fail again to take His presence seriously. Instead of His actual presence we carry certain convictions and doctrines along. We adhere to them as much as we can, but we fail again, their voice grows dim and distant, and we sometimes don't even notice. But think of those eyes of fire again being right there on the spot as we go our way and engage in questionable practices. This is nothing new, I know. Our fathers stressed the covenant-walk-of-life. They said: you are in the Lord's constant company. Malachi describes Christ as the messenger of the *covenant*. What a frightful realization as Christmas is in the land. To confess a Saviour born to us means that we will have no privacy any more. Every minute is spent in His presence. It once happened that General Eisenhower, then president of the United States, gave a congressional banquet at which other dignities were invited as well. A young man entered the dining hall, producing a little name card that said 'Peter Eisenhower.' He claimed to be a nephew of the president, and was promptly admitted. But as the guests mingled a reporter happened to mention to Mr. Eisenhower that he had just made his acquaintance with the president's nephew. Whereupon the president asked, 'o, lead me to him, will you.' Now that was a painful confrontation. To be an imposter and a liar is one thing, to be found out *in person* is quite another. Christmas is not for imposters, people for whom the Christian faith is a veneer, people who have not really been gripped by the presence of the Lord. "Who shall stand when he appeareth?" . . .

Much has been said and written about the reality of faith. It is a burning question today, but it has been that throughout the years. Young people have complained that their faith means so little to them, they don't feel it, it does not really change things, and their prayers don't seem to go up and accomplish anything. There is much soul-searching going on in almost every denomination about the practice of faith. How do we make our faith meaningful, how do we show our faith in this secularized day and age? This is a wholesome development in itself and we can only thank God for it, even though it may cause us all sorts of discomfort. Some churches have done away with dead form. They have adopted techniques and means of communication taken from the rough and tumble of life. They tried to bridge the gap between forms and reality. They have gone out to where the action is. They have turned the church inside out. And we have all been confronted with the challenge to *do* honestly what we believe. In this respect the Roman Catholic Church is not different. In fact the word 'Christmas' is a Roman Catholic word, the second syllable, '-mas' stands for 'mass', the celebration of the eucharist, the sacrament celebrated as a commemoration of the birth of Christ. That sacrament in the Roman Catholic Church is a very realistic one. Christ, so the Catholics maintain, is crucified anew at the mass event. But in all actuality that idea of the sacrament has not brought Christ any closer to the awareness of the Catholic believer. A literalistic concept of the Lord's presence does not add to the reality of faith. One may wonder why it is that the Christian faith is sometimes so unreal to us and why it is that the deeds of the church are far less convincing than its words. The solution is surprisingly close at hand. The Christ Himself, the Saviour, the Mediator, must be given a *central personal place* in our life and in our church. The only way we can celebrate Christ's birth acceptably (in God's sight, that is), is to lift it out above the sentimental setting we have given it, and to meet and greet the Saviour in our heart and know our constant companion.

Three things will then happen. We will know the *pain of judgment*. Malachi warns us for that already. We are being caught. Christ steps into our life and we are caught in the act. It is the pain of confrontation. Punishment in itself is not so bad. It can be measured out according to certain prescriptions and borne as such. But not so with God our Father. He made us as an expression of His measureless love. And we broke with Him, we sided with God's enemy, Satan, the father of lies. No wonder that Adam and Eve hid when God's searching eye went through the Garden. Christmas, God-with-us, will have to have this pain in it, if it is to be authentic. That's why we avoid it, and rather talk about the meaning of faith and its relevance endlessly. Meeting this Christ, personally, in our Christmas celebration, has the second thing. It makes the *forgiveness of sins* a very unique experience: humbling and very joyful. At a deeply personal level Christ assures us that it is well between Him and us, that we are restored to God's presence as His children. Forgiveness is then much more than to be relieved from a sentence according to the book of the law. To be forgiven is to be in the clear with God Who then means everything to us. Prayer is now no longer limited to set times, a sort of necessary ritual, but the believer talks to God throughout the day. And that's why Christmas is the celebration of *Christian power* to us. As little children we have to simply accept that Christ is touchingly close to us. In our heart and around us. Impossible for the unforgiven sinner. But real for the believer. A little child fears nothing in the big city on mother's hand. This world is filled with devils who threaten to undo us as Luther found out. But we are in Christ's Company. All this does not come by itself. This takes the constant practice of faith. It involves holy living, obedient and dedicated. This should set the tone for our Christmas celebration. There is nothing like it.

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CHRISTMAS MEDITATION

THE PRINCE OF PEACE

Bloated, bulge-eyed Biafran babies starve slowly.

Vietnam is raked by an ugly war that no one seems to want or be able to stop.

The land where our Lord was born is a powderkeg; the nights are not very silent, shepherds keeping watch had better keep a sharp lookout.

The Iron Curtain has clanged down hard on Czechoslovakia.

Racial conflicts turn cities into armed camps with deserted streets and shuttered stores.

In homes and schools the young and the older glare suspiciously at each other from their side of the generation gap.

Affluent kids are eager for any kicks to escape the boredom of plenty.

Huge plants spit their pollutants into the air choking the breath and the joy of work out of man.

Poverty lives besides plenty, want amongst wealth.

And who cares?

It's about time for some GOOD news again — and we have it!

> *"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given;*
> *and the government will be upon his shoulder,*
> *and his name will be called:*
> *'Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God Everlasting Father,*
> *Prince of Peace!"* *(Isaiah 9:6)*

The Prince of Peace has come! A war-torn, war-weary world once again remembers His birth.

So . . . "Deck the halls with boughs of holly,
It's the season to be jolly . . . ."
. . . jolly, and a little friendlier, a bit more generous, slightly more considerate; after all it is the season of "peace and goodwill."

Drop a quarter in the Sally Ann kettle — help a poor bum.

Bigger Christmas bonuses again.

Pay a few cents extra per pound for your golden turkey, that will make this Christmas one to remember.

"Hey, we should send them a card too! Wonder how they're doing?"

For it's "the season."

The followers of Jesus observe with gratitude and amazement the small and big changes that His birth still makes in people. But the church is somewhat embarrassed to speak of our Lord as the Prince of Peace. For not only the world is ripped apart by sin and blind, selfish pride; the followers of Jesus are not all as meek as the Lamb either. From many tongues prayers ascend to the one Lord, but the same tongues at times do not speak to each other, much less do their operators help each other and do something together.

Of course, Ireland was a bad scene. It is better to do that kind of in-fighting privately, not before the TV cameras. That hurts our image. But, meanwhile, what happens to the Message?

Well, we reduce the Message to fit the facts. Then Jesus came from His heavenly glory, became like us, died, rose, ascended, rules, so that we could again have peace WITH GOD, a private, inner, almost invisible peace. Peace-with-God is certainly included in the Christmas message. Jesus came to pay the price for our sin. He suffered for our miserable petty selfishness. Because of Jesus God will forgive and take us back. Because of Jesus we know how much God cares for us, even when we make of the world what hits us in the headlines.

But this peace which Jesus brings is more than a safe little refuge, an inner feeling which we nourish and hold desperately while current events scream at us that nothing has changed.

For something has changed — drastically!

God has shown clearly that He cares. He cares for His creatures and for His creation, even when they have rebelled against Him and rejected Him. He still cares and calls us back. "For God so loved the world that . . . ", that Jesus came to die and live here, to show us a better, a NEW way of living in God's world.

The change is a new chance for real life in Jesus Christ. But the trouble is that we limit the peace announced by angels to something private and secret within us. The world is for a time a bit nicer and friendlier.

We find that rather phoney. But while accepting God's gift of peace in His Son we remain rather stingy. The peace of Christ may not be confined to the vertical relation, with God; His peace is to affect our horizontal relations with our fellow-man. The Prince of Peace changes life for all who follow Him; He did once and still does.

God's Son became man and dwelt here briefly.
But He still wants to dwell here, beginning in your heart.

> *"I ask God . . . that Christ will make his home in your hearts, through faith.*
> *I pray that you may have your roots and foundations in love . . . ."* *(Ephesians 3)*

Is that not the main problem: WE have not changed enough. The Prince of Peace calls His followers to be "peace-MAKERS," then we shall be called "sons of God"; then we will reflect that our Father in heaven is a peacemaker, Who acted for peace by sending His Son.

Have we perhaps forgotten that those who receive Christ's peace are to pass it on? Where are our efforts to make peace in the racial, ecclesiastical, generation, class, labour, educational, political conflicts of the day? How are we showing that in Christ we don't live by bread or for the profit-motive alone, that in Him all ages, classes, and races can be one, that justice is for the poor and weak as well as the rich and strong, that authority needs to reflect the Father and needs to be followed? Etcetera!

Isaiah links two things together, which we separate too often. "Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end . . ."

If we do separate the rule of the Prince of Peace in our lives from our daily well-being (peace), it need not surprise us that the sinful facts of everyday life do not fit the marvelous revelation of the new life in Jesus. But we must not think then that Jesus has failed to live up to promise, and store his title "Prince of Peace" away with the Christmas decorations for another year. We must rather look at our own hearts and lives! Does Jesus Christ dwell there, are we rooted and grounded in His love, and are we acting out of it?

Any embarrassment that we do feel when today we call Jesus the Prince of Peace will have to be our embarassment that we have not really listened to Him.

The Prince of Peace did not fail, He won the victory, He gives us peace. We have peace with God; but the Prince also wants His followers to get along, He wants the Creation to be used according to the Maker's instructions. So as His representatives we are to be peacemakers here. And it is possible. We see small beginnings in the acts of kindness that mark the season, and in men swallowing pride for Christ's sake, in helping, sharing. Even today Christmas is able to provide a temporary truce in hostilities, in Vietnam and locally.

May the season remind us that there is new hope and new life in Jesus Christ. The Prince of Peace came to die for our sin, to reconcile us to God, and to show us the way of peace. Let us not confine our joy, our gratitude, our peacemaking to this season alone.

> *"Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David, and over his Kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and for evermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this."* *(Isaiah 9:7)*

Get with it, Christian; your Prince has given you a job to do.

Morris N. Greidanus

THE AGONY OF CHRISTMAS

Where can we find You Lord?
— — — — — — — — — — — —
In the ballrooms of the Bayshore Inn?
Where the danceband beats the Glory
out of the Message, in that Christmas story.
And where is always room for the Brotherhood of Sin
Hallelujah???

Where can we find You Lord?
— — — — — — — — — — — —
In the big and busy shopping centres?
Where we hear "the angels sing"
about: "Glory to the Newborn King,"
while we offer our dollar bills over the counters.
Hallelujah???

Where can we find You Lord?
— — — — — — — — — — — —
We want to send You our "Season's Greetings"
on daintily painted and printed cards.
Faithfully we decorate our homes and yards,
and attend all the prescribed Christmas meetings.

One Day we shall find You Lord!
— — — — — — — — — — — —
When you will some back on Judgement Day
on the clouds; and the sound of trumpets
shall overcome the blast of loudspeakers.
With one breath You shall flutter
our precious dollarbills into the gutter . . .

No more pot-bellied Santas.
No more Christmastrees.
No more shoppingplaza's . . .

But the New Jeruzalem!
Where we forever shall sing
Glory to our God and King.

Hallelujah?
Yes, Hallelujah!!

d. verseveldt

Patricia Young Says . . .

Christmas 1969

If Christianity were available only through membership in a country club requiring qualifications, sponsorship and dues, can you imagine how people would clamour to join and boast of their membership? If it were banned from our Universities, can you visualize students organizing protests and demanding their right to study the Bible in the name of academic freedom?

If it were a salable commodity, can you picture the time and effort of businessmen and advertising agencies to promote it? If God's grace could be bottled, would it produce a nation of spiritual alcoholics? If the gifts of God were found wrapped under the Christmas tree once a year, would we immortalize Him on every street corner?

But it isn't. It costs nothing. Faith is a gift of God freely given to those who seek it. One does not have to sit for and entrance examination, present credentials, bank book or sponsors. It is not necessary to obtain a licence from City Hall to practise it or preach it to others.

Sad to say, like today's over-indulged child, familiarity breeds contempt. We use our faith much like a housewife used a broom — knowing that she would be lost without it, but shoving it out of sight when not needed and apologizing if guests happened to spot it.

But Christian love requires no apology. It needs no watering down to accommodate the sensitivities of others. Christ made no apology for the message He preached. He used no weasal words to give the impression of being "one of the boys." He was different and called upon others to be different with Him.

As we once more prepare to celebrate the birth of the Christ Child, I wish you love, peace and the Grace to stand tall in His name.

May your strength, patience and compassion multiply and tranquility walk with you throughout the coming year.

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Balorig keerde Emily zich van haar schrijfmachine af. Het stuk papier was nog net zo onschuldig wit als een half uur tevoren, toen ze het erin gedraaid had.

De opdracht van haar baas, de redacteur, luidde: Schrijf een verhaal voor de editie van de krant, die de zaterdag vóór het Kerstfeest verschijnt. Een kerstverhaal dus. En Emily hield niet van kerstverhalen, ze zag er de noodzaak niet van in en maar heel zelden waren ze echt goed te noemen. Ze wist echter wel beter dan te protesteren. Als de baas het in z'n hoofd had dat zij daar dit jaar nu maar eens voor moest zorgen, dan verwachtte hij verder ook geen gezeur.

Zuchtend zakte ze wat onderuit op haar stoel. Er was niets in haar brein wat ook maar in de verste verte op een idee leek. Haar gedachten dwaalden af naar het echte Kerstgebeuren. Stel, dat dat geweldige feit nog nooit plaats gevonden had, maar dat de mensheid er nog steeds op wachtte. En als het nu binnenkort eens gebeuren ging, zou het Kind in de Kribbe dan geloof vinden op aarde? Stel ook dat zij, Emily, er dan eens als verslaggeefster bij betrokken zou zijn. Toen liet ze haar fantasie de vrije loop ....

Het was maar een middelgrote stad, dat Bethlehem. Hoewel het al laat op de avond was, werd er in de kantoren van de "Bethlehem Star" door een kleine ploeg nog onder hoogspanning gewerkt. Er werd een medische conventie gehouden in de stad, die door haar ligging temidden van veel landelijk natuurschoon daarvoor blijkbaar uitermate geschikt werd geacht. Het hele gedoe zou een paar dagen duren en had alles behoorlijk in rep en roer gebracht. De twee hotels en alle pensions zaten mudvol.

De redactie van de "Bethlehem Star" was vast besloten een goede beurt te maken en dus werd er tot in de nacht gewerkt om in de ochtendeditie over het openingsdiner van de voorbije avond tot in alle details te kunnen uitwijden.

Toen gebeurde er iets vreemds. 't Werd plotseling doodstil in het gebouw. Alle machines stopten, niemand riep meer iets, niemand vroeg meer iets, er klapten geen deuren meer en verschillende verslagen, gereed voor de drukkerij, lagen vergeten op een bureau.

Waar de Stem vandaan kwam, zou niemand hebben kunnen zeggen. Wel drong het tot iedereen door dat er met gezag gesproken werd en dit is wat ze hoorden: "Schrik niet, dit is Goed Nieuws voor alle mensen. Zojuist is de Redder der Wereld geboren, in de basement van het Herodes-hotel. Hoewel het iedereen aangaat, wordt het alleen aan U, mensen van de "Bethlehem Star", bekend gemaakt. Gaat U maar kijken, het is echt waar." Een geluid als van een machtig, jubelend koor verstierf daarna langzaam in de verte.

Verdwaasd keken ze elkaar aan, de redacteur van het Stadsnieuws en de loopjongen, de verslaggevers en de beide fotografen. Als in een droom stonden ze op, lieten de ochtendeditie voor wat hij was, wrongen zich met elkaar in de stationwagen van de man die het in de drukkerij te zeggen had en reden toen in volle vaart door de stille stad naar het Herodeshotel. De portier vroeg niets, hij liet hen zwijgend hun gang gaan. Ze vonden zonder moeite hun weg naar het basement en daar, in een hoekje tussen het machtige verwarmingsapparaat en de machine die het vuilnis vernietigde, zagen ze een heel menselijk tafreeltje.

Mr. Joseph Davidson vertelde hun schuchter, maar met een ondertoon van opluchting en intense blijdschap, dat zijn verloofde, Maria, zojuist bevallen was van een Zoon. "En we noemen Hem Jezus," zo besloot hij zijn korte relaas.

Maria leek erg moe en heel jong nog, zoals ze daar op het veldbed lag, maar ze glimlachte gelukkig. In een oud, blijkbaar inderhaast opgeduikeld carbed, schreide de Baby.

Alsof het afgesproken was, knielden ze er met z'n allen omheen. De redacteur zei: "Goddank dat Hij er nu is!" Voordat ze weer weggingen maakte Henk, de fotograaf, nog gauw een paar plaatjes. Op hun weg terug naar de krant zongen ze van puur geluk.

De medische conventie werd naar het binnenblad verschoven en op de voorpagina werd de volgende morgen dit hele wonderlijke, moole verhaal aan allen die het maar lezen wilden, bekend gemaakt. De reactie van het publiek viel niet mee! Een enkeling geloofde het, maar verreweg de meesten smaalden: de drukte en het overwerk zijn hen zeker in de bol geslagen!

Het ergste was nog, dat ze er zelf in het nuchtere morgenlicht ook aan begonnen te twijfelen....

De volgende dagen was het dan ook weer het nieuws over de medische conventie dat de hele voorpagina besloeg. Aan de Pil, hart- en vaatziekten, de risico's van het roken, werd, tot tevredenheid van de lezers, weer alle aandacht besteed. Een enkele keer werd er door de lui die er die nacht bij betrokken waren geweest, nog weleens over gesproken, maar de algemene neiging was toch, om het zo gauw mogelijk te vergeten.

De conventie behoorde inmiddels weer tot het verleden en alles ging nu weer z'n gewone gang, in de stad en bij de krant. Tot op een morgen de redacteur van het Stadsnieuws stopte bij Emily's bureau. Een beetje onhandig begon hij: "Zeg eh, om nog eens op die nacht terug te komen en op die mensen in het Herodes-hotel," hij schraapte zijn keel terwijl Emily hem

(Continued on page 5)

ONS FEUILLETON

WIJDER DAN DE WERELD

door S. P. Akkerman

HOOFDSTUK 17

Riekje en Siebe lopen nu langs een smal weggetje, recht op een nieuw huis aan. Op het land erachter rijen zich de lage eendenhokken. De witte en bruine vogels scharrelen onbeholpen met lange achterlijven over de dorre grond.

De ouders en de jongens zijn al thuis uit de kerk. De vrouw zet water op voor de thee. De jongens nemen de vreemde soldaat met belangstelling op. De vader is een magere tanige man met langwerpig gezicht en groene ogen. Hij geeft een stevige hand. En stelt zich voor: "Zweers."

"Blomhuis," zegt Siebe. Dan komt de vrouw op hem af. Die heeft er zo veel poespas niet bij. "Ik ben de moeder van Riekje, dat snapte je zeker al. Ze zei: wij troffen deze week zo'n aardige soldaat en hij gaat naar onze kerk ook."

"Ja, ja, hou nou maar op," zegt Riekje, "hij gelooft het wel."

Zo zitten ze dan in de gezellige kamer, met een scheurkalender tegen de wand en vanuit het raam het gezicht op de eenden.

De vrouw schenkt thee. En Siebes ogen dwalen naar het pientere gezichtje van die Riekje. Een mooi meisje, stelt hij vast.

Zweers werpt een balletje op over de preek en wat de kinderen ervan hebben opgestoken. Dan vraagt hij naar Siebe's thuis. Het wordt al gauw een aardig gesprek. Van het boerenbedrijf in Friesland blijkt Zweers geen kaas te hebben gegeten. Maar over eenden, die nooit in het water zwemmen, weet hij heel wat te vertellen. Dat interesseert Siebe eigenlijk maar matig.

Hij is blij, als hij weer met Riekje buiten staat en ze een zandpaadje naar een dennenbos inslaan. Er zijn hier nogal wat vakantiemensen, die lui in de heide liggen of bij hun tent, die ze hier en daar bij een boer op het erf hebben opgezet . . . Een vrolijke omgeving hier . . .

In het bos, waar de wind zingt in de toppen der sparren, vinden ze wel een plaatsje waar ze samen fijn kunnen zitten. Siebe zoent haar eens een keer, en zij doet het terug, maar een eindeloze vrijerij wordt het niet. Daar houden ze allebei niet van. Riekje praat maar en Siebe lacht maar wat.

Het zit hier goed in dat sparrebos op de Veluwe. Anders om deze tijd stond hij bij zijn vrienden of zat hij ergens bij een van hen in huis. Dit is beter. Dit is mooier. Wat dit worden moet of worden kan, daar kun je nu nog niet overdenken. De zon schijnt, de bemoste grond voelt warm aan, en naast hem zit Riekje Zweers.

Ze is twintig jaar, Siebe wordt het dit jaar nog als hij het beleeft . . . Ze praten over jeugdbewegingen. Dan over films die ze hebben gezien.

"Vader is daar eigenlijk niet voor," zegt ze. "O, de mijne is er vlak op tegen . . ."

"Ja, dat heb je zo. Maar ja . . . wij, die in of na de oorlog geboren zijn," zegt ze, "zien de dingen weleens wat anders. Maar daarom hou je het geloof nog wel. Of vind jij van niet, Siebe?"

"Natuurlijk wel. In die oude vormen zit het niet altijd . . . Maar dat zegt mijn vader mij niet na. Geloof dat maar niet . . ."

Ze trekt de smalle schouders hoog op. "Dat heb je altijd. De jongeren willen altijd wat anders dan de ouderen. Dat is met mijn vader precies zo."

Het broodeten verloopt plezierig. Een vreemde soldaat in hun midden geeft aan het eentonige leven van de eendenboer wat afleiding. Over Friesland willen ze ook wel eens wat horen. Ze zijn er volslagen onbekend.

"Ze hebben er nog wel 's mot over die taal, niet?" vraagt Zweers. "Ik heb er wel eens iets over gelezen. En ze preken ook vaak in het Fries, niet?"

Siebe's tong komt nu helemaal los. Hoewel hij er zich thuis nooit druk om heeft gemaakt, zoals zijn broer Willem, die boeken in het Fries je van het vindt — hangt hij hier een heel verhaal op over de strijd van de Friezen, die recht eisen voor de hun van God gegeven taal. Zweers schudt ernstig het hoofd. En de anderen kijken alsof daar in Friesland geheime genootschappen samenzweren om de ergste dinge te beramen . . .

"Zij moeten daar niet vergeten, dat ze onderdanen van de Nederlandse regering zijn," zegt Zweers. "En verder, ik kan het mij moeilijk voorstellen."

Dan laat Siebe het er ook maar bij. Hij is ook meer geinteresseerd in Riekje met haar heldere ogen, dan in de strijd om de taal van zijn Friese volk.

Het is half elf, als ze afscheid nemen. Twee kleine handjes liggen op de mouw van de groengrijze uniform.

Hij zoent haar nog eens en dan vraagt Siebe: "Hoe moet dat nou verder?"

Ja, ja, daar heeft hij de koe bij de horens. Hoe moet dat nou? Riekje zegt er eerst niet veel op. Onder haar zwijgen vraagt Siebe zich af: Gaat hij volgende week naar huis en is deze ontmoeting een aardig intermezzo, en verder niet meer?

"Hoe bedoel je?" vraagt ze dan. Maar ze weet heel goed wat er bedoeld wordt.

"Ik bedoel . . . zal ik terugkomen?"

"Dat ligt aan jou, he?"

"Dus jij vindt het wel goed?"

Ze kijkt hem aan, een beetje weifelend. Als ze nu ja zegt en hij zegt nee? Dat zou niet leuk zijn . . .

"Wil je wel terug komen?"

Ha, ha, die Siebe. Nu moet hij het dan maar zeggen.

Vele gedachten vliegen door zijn hoofd. Een meisje hier op de Veluwe. Haar vader in de eenden. En toch, Riekje met haar heldere ogen, haar mooie gezichtje en haar lieve stem. Met wie hij naar dezelfde kerk zou kunnen gaan . . . En dan neemt Siebe Blomhuis zijn besluit: "Ja, ik wil graag terugkomen. Vind je het goed?"

Twee armen stevig om zijn hals, een warme mond die hem zoent . . .

Bij de kerk treft hij Jefke. Die heeft zijn fiets al uit het rek gehaald. "Rijen dan maar," zegt hij.

"Ja, dat dacht ik ook. Is het je wat bevallen?"

"Slecht," bromt Jefke, "slecht, slecht. Meer theologie dan liefde. Het meisje woont op een boerderij. En laat ik me daar nu laten ontvallen, dat ik Rooms ben. Heden, mensen, pek in het vuur. Die man haalde er van alles bij, wat ver boven mijn petje ging. Ze hadden er goede ham, dat wel, maar die bezwaren tegen mijn kerk. Ik geloof dat Luther zijn profeet was. Nou, ik heb ze laten betijen. Zo goed ben ik niet in de concilies van Trente en weetikveel thuis, en ik was daar ook niet gekomen om een dispuut met die familie te houden. Ik was meer op de liefde uit. Nou afijn, dat is later nog een beetje bijgedraaid, maar ik kom daar niet weer . . . Was het bij jou beter?"

"Ja, best."

"Ga je er weer naar toe?"

"Ja."

Jefke neemt de baret er bij af. "Dan ben jij er nog erger ingetippeld dan ik. Een meisje op de Veluwe, als je in Friesland woont. Blomhuis, Blomhuis, waar was je verstand in die bange uren toen je dat hebt beloofd?"

"Maar kijk daar eens voor je . . ."

Ja, daar doemt de kazerne donker op tegen de lichte nachthemel.

"Bij deze inrichting moeten wij de eerste tijd onze gedachten maar weer bepalen," orakelt Jefke. "Wij zullen eerst zien of we een strozak onder onze vermoeide lichamen kunnen vinden."

Ze zetten de fietsen in een loods, en verdwijnen dan door de grote poort.

Sikke Blomhuis harkt zijn erf. Het is weer zaterdag. Dan moet het erf er een beetje netjes bij liggen. Zo heeft zijn vader het hem geleerd, zo doen ze dat hier allemaal. Het is mooi weer. Het is tegenwoordig alle dagen mooi zomerweer, maar hij wilde wel dat het eens een dag regende. De landen worden droog. En bij Jetse met zijn hoog land is het zeker helemaal in de war. Nee, erg vrolijk staat het gezicht van Sikke niet. Er is wel meer dat hem dwars zit. Mensen, hou op . . . Verleden week stuurt me daar Siebe ijskoud een kaart: "Kom niet thuis." Hij zou weleens willen weten, waarom niet. "Zeker met een dienstkameraad mee gegaan." Zo doet zijn vrouw dat af. Ja, gemakkelijk. Maar hij miert over dergelijke dingen. Visioenen van bierkroegen en nachtbars komen dan voor zijn ogen. Je weet het maar nooit met die jonge knapen, en je wilt ze toch graag op de goede weg houden. En Lies . . . Had me dat meisje het in haar hoofd gezet om met een paar meisjes te gaan kamperen. Met een tent op de fiets de wereld in.

"Wij slapen op campings. Best vertrouwd." Ja, ja . . . Hij heeft er een stokje voor gestoken. Zijn vrouw kon nog wel zo onnozel zijn om het schaap te laten gaan ook. Ze is naar een zuster van hem bij Dokkum, die met een politieagent getrouwd is, gaan logeren. Hoewel ze daar weinig zin in had. O, die jeugd van tegenwoordig. Vroeger, toen hij jong was . . . Een dag met de bus erop uit met de jongelingsvereniging, en een dag met de boot van de zang, en daarmee uit. En wat hadden ze altijd een plezier.

Deze na-oorlogse tijd begrijpt hij slecht. Bar slecht. Bij zijn buurman hebben ze televisie gekregen. Dat zou zijn vrouw ook willen hebben. Hoe is het mogelijk. Hij is er een avond gaan kijken. Buurman Dijkstra hield niet op met zeuren . . . maar hij gaat er nooit weer heen. Heden mensen, wat een poppenkast. Hij heeft er geen goed woord voor over. Waardeloos. En toen hij en zijn vrouw naar huis liepen en hij zijn gal zonder reserve uitspuwde, zei ze: "Ik vond het wel aardig, Sikke."

Hij heeft die avond geen woord meer gezegd . . .

(Wordt vorvolgd)

De Geest blaast waarheen Hij wil

(Vervolg van pag. 4)

vragend aankeek. "Ik dacht zo," ging hij toen wat meer gedecideerd verder, "die lui leken nogal godsdienstig. Misschien wordt die Baby binnenkort wel gedoopt en daar moest jij dan maar eens op af om er verslag van te doen." Gelijk beende hij hij naar zijn volgende slachtoffer.

Er zaten maar een handjevol mensen in de kerk. De dominee las het doopsformulier alsof het een vervelende routine was. Hij had nog een beetje moeite gehad met de kerkeraad omdat de jonge ouders niet getrouwd bleken te zijn, maar tenslotte had hun verlangen om voor modern aangezien te worden, de doorslag gegeven en werd de toestemming voor de doop ook van dit Kind, gegeven.

De mensen keken ongeïnteresseerd toe. Niemand kende de jongelui die daar vooraan in de kerk stonden, hij in een kaal pak en zij blijkbaar in een afdankertje van een goeiege mevrouw.

Ineens ontstond er deining. De stokoude dominee Simeonse stond op van zijn vaste plaatsje achter de ouderlingen en liep zo vlug zijn stramme benen hem dragen konden, naar het doopvont. Daar nam hij de Baby van de verbaasde moeder over en sprak met zijn beverige oude stem een dankgebed uit. Toen kwam ook de kittige oude juffrouw Anna naar voren, vriendelijk knikte ze Mr. Davidson en Maria toe, en blij lachend streelde ze het Kind, stemde in met alles wat dominee Simeonse zei en vertelde later aan ieder die het maar horen wilde, dat die kleine Baby, met Zijn rode rimpelgezichtje, nu de Zoon van God was, de Redder van heel deze miserabele wereld.

De dominee die de dienst leidde, probeerde zo goed mogelijk de orde te herstellen, maar veel aandacht voor zijn preek was er niet meer.

't Kostte Emily de hele verdere zondagmiddag om haar verslag helemaal naar haar zin klaar te krijgen voor de maandagmorgeneditie. Vurig hoopte ze, dat ze nu verder niet meer in deze vreemde geschiedenis betrokken zou raken. Die wens werd vervuld, althans voorlopig ....

Jaren later, toen ze allang de krant voor het huishouden verwisseld had en met Bram was getrouwd, werd ze er nog eens aan herinnerd, toen de kranten, de t.v. en de radio melding maakten van een twaalfjarige Jongen die op een vergadering van de Wereldraad van Kerken de theologen versteld deed staan over zijn Bijbelkennis en wijs inzicht. Maar al spoedig maakte ook dit nieuws weer plaats voor belangrijker dingen, zoals b.v. de voorbereidingen voor een bemand ruimteschip naar Mars.

Totdat de tijd kwam dat er geen ontkomen meer aan was. Emily was al lang en breed grootmoeder. Haar jongste kinderen waren teenagers, twee waren er nog thuis. Meer en meer kwam er toen een zekere Jezus in het nieuws en Emily kwam die nacht in het Herodes-hotel weer scherp voor de geest te staan. Ze begon zich erg onrustig te voelen. Die Jezus beweerde dat Hij de Zoon van God was. Dat Hij gekomen was om allen die in Hem geloofden van de dood te redden. Wat moest je daar nu van denken? De meningen over Hem waren verdeeld. De geleerden haalden hun schouders op en proberden Hem verder te negeren. De theologen waren over 't algemeen geïrriteerd, want het bracht grote onrust in de kerk. Ze spraken van massa-suggestie en overspannen idealisten die zeker dachten dat de verlossing van de mensheid door zo'n nieuwlichter zo maar even tot stand zou kunnen worden gebracht.

Maar het gewone volk liep Hem in drommen achterna. Zelf zocht Hij het ook niet in hoge kringen. Zijn naaste medewerkers waren een stelletje vissers, die zich nog een karig bestaan wisten te verschaffen op een enkel stukje zee waar nog geen onderwatersteden waren aangelegd. Eens, zo ging het verhaal, had Hij zichzelf uitgenodigd bij het eten bij een man die bekend stond als een gemene afperser. Zelfs voor de hippies en de strip-teasers scheen Hij nog een Goed Woord over te hebben! In elk geval predikte Hij het Christendom met de dáád. Als het tenminste waar was wat ze allemaal van Hem vertelden. Soms was het werkelijk niet te gelóven! Maar ja, die reporters voor de t.v. en van de krant zouden je toch ook maar niet wat wijs maken!

Toen een nichtje van Hem trouwde, moet Hij het kind voor altijd aan Zich verplicht hebben, doordat Hij haar bruiloft van een ontijdig einde redde en er een heerlijk, uitbundig feest van maakte, toen Hij water in beste wijn wist te veranderen.

Meer dan vijfduizend mensen aten zich rond toen Hij hun, ergens ver van de bewoonde wereld, waar ze Hem met al hun noden en narigheden blindelings gevolgd waren, een maaltijd bereidde van wat onnozele Toastmaster broden en een paar visjes. Een beste vriend van Hem, Lazarus, was al vier dagen dood en begraven, maar nadat Jezus er Zich mee bemoeid had, liep hij weer met zijn beide zusters te wandelen!

Kankerpatienten, die niet veel meer waren dan vel over scherp uitstekend been, liepen gezond en wel weer door de wereld rond. De instituten voor blinden en doofstommen konden wel inpakken. Zenuwpatienten, die alle hoop hadden laten varen, blaakten weer van levenslust!

Emily's eigen jongens, die voor televisie maar weinig belangstelling hadden, keken toch trouw naar het nieuws. Ze wilden geen enkele kans, om ook maar een glimp van Hem op te vangen, laten schieten. Ze bleken enthousiaster dan zij en Bram. Misschien omdat het in hun hart nog kinderen waren ....?

Maar het allervreemdste en ook het meest ongelooflijke was toch wel, dat er steeds meer mensen kwamen die innerlijk veranderd leken. Er straalde rust en blijdschap van hen uit. Ze beweerden dat hun zonden vergeven waren en dat ze het eeuwige leven hadden.

Toen kwam er een dag dat het de autoriteiten te gortig werd. Ze kregen moeite om de orde in het land te bewaren. En zoiets konden ze er nu net niet bij hebben. Er was weer een verkiezing op komst en steeds duidelijker begon te blijken, Wie de keuze van de massa zou zijn. In kerkelijke kringen groeide de onrust ook en dat, terwijl de dominees toch al haast niet wisten wat ze van de Bijbel wél en niet moesten geloven, en van deze Jezus spraken de profetieën zó duidelijk en klopte alles zó precies, dat het eigenlijk een belediging was voor een mens die een beetje nadacht, om Hem zomaar, zonder slag of stoot te moeten aanvaarden.

Dus, na wat gegoochel met het recht, verdween Hij van het toneel. Emily trok wit weg, toen ze tussen de mensenmenigte die bij Zijn executie te hoop liep, op het televisiescherm een vrouw meende te herkennen. Geluidloos vormden haar lippen de woorden: "Maria ...."

Met een schok keert ze tot de werkelijkheid terug. Het papier in de schrijfmachine is nog steeds uitdagend wit. Maar dat is voor het ógenblik niet in het minst belangrijk. Wat wel belangrijk is, is de vraag die zich onweerstaanbaar aan haar opdringt: Hoe komt het, dat ik gelóóf? Geloof met heel mijn hart in dat wat voor velen een dwaasheid is, een struikelblok? En hoe duidelijk heeft ze het niet gezien in haar fantasie, dat het hele geloof voor een buitenstaander wel de dwaasheid gekroond moet zijn? Dus heeft ze het beslist niet aan zichzelf te danken. Aan haar waarheidsliefde bijvoorbeeld, of aan haar scherp onderscheidingsvermogen. Neen, alle roem is uitgesloten, onverdiende zaligheën heeft zij van haar God genoten! Ja, éér zij nog was geboren, eer God's hand, die alles schiep, iets uit niet tot aanzijn riep, had Zijn liefde haar verkoren, toen al!!

Het Kind in de kribbe zag haar aan, de Man van Smarten ging voor haar de dood in, Zijn Geest blaast waarheen Hij wil en wonder aller wonderen, zij werd er door geraakt!

(Mrs.) Alice Los.

Het gezin in de kerk

Als men aandachtig de kranten leest is het voldoende duidelijk, dat men over het algemeen vertrouwen heeft in het potentieel van de christelijke kerk. Niet dat men tevreden is over de kerk. Integendeel. Men heeft ontzettend veel kritiek op haar. Men wijst weer op gebieden waar men de stem van de kerk zou willen horen, maar die niet hoort. Overal ziet men de decadentie verder gaan en men wordt bang. Zo kan het toch niet doorgaan! Ergens moet de achteruitgang toch ophouden. En men roept de regeringen te hulp, maar ook de kerken. Want de kerk, zo denkt men, heeft grote invloed en kan machtig veel bereiken.

Die kritiek komt niet alleen van buiten-kerkelijken. Ook in de kerk zelf kan men deze stemmen vernemen. De kerk moet meer actief zijn, meer zich het lot van de mensen en van de wereld aantrekken, minder theologisch, minder conservatief, minder legalistisch zijn. Men roept, dat de kerk het verlossende woord zal spreken, de verlossende daad zal doen, maar de kerk lijkt wel onmachtig. Hoe komt dat toch?

Misschien zijn daar wel heel veel oorzaken voor aan te wijzen. Zo zal het grote aantal denominaties, de grote verschillen in theologisch denken, het gebrek aan eenheid onder christenen, daar allemaal wel iets mee te maken hebben. Maar de schijnbare zwakte van de kerk is waarschijnlijk het beste te verklaren uit het feit, dat de kerk recruteert uit de gezinnen. Natuurlijk, de kerk bestaat uit gelovigen, niet uit gezinnen. Maar dit neemt niet weg, dat vooral in de reformatorische kerken het gezin in de kerk een uitermate grote rol speelt. Wij mogen gerust zeggen, dat de kracht van de kerk veelal rust op de geloofsbeleving in de gezinnen. Sterke gezinnen maken een sterke kerk.

Kinderen willen liever zien dan horen wat de liefde van God in het leven van hun ouders betekent. Zij worden meer geïmponeerd door de levenswijze dan door de woorden van vader en moeder. Het maakt erg veel verschil voor de kinderen hoe vader aan tafel uit de bijbel leest en hoe hij bidt. Is dit een telkens weer terugkerend ritueel, of is het een telkens weerkerende ontmoeting met God? Worden de kinderen jalours op wat vader en moeder blijkbaar bezitten, of doen zij aan het kerkelijk leven mee uit traditie?

Wij zijn daarom blij met een dezer dagen bij Baker Book House in Grand Rapids verschenen boekje van Rev. T. C. Van Kooten onder de titel "Building the Family Altar." Binnenkort hopen wij dit boekje in ons blad te bespreken. Maar wij zouden er nu al vast de aandacht op willen vestigen. Rev. Van Kooten zegt daarin onder meer: "The prevalent ignorance of the Bible is being noted by everyone who is concerned, especially by those who inquire into the matter. College professors who quiz incoming students of their knowledge of the Bible have observed a steady decline in Biblical knowledge during the last years. The historical facts and names found in the Bible are not even known, to say nothing of its spiritual message. An increasing number of spiritual illiterates is being produced by our homes."

Daar hebt u het. Wij kunnen wel klagen over de daadkracht (of het gemis daarvan) in de christelijke kerk, maar is het een wonder, dat die daadkracht ontbreekt, als de leden van die kerk geen of een geringe kennis hebben van de bijbel?

Rev. Van Kooten roept ons in zijn boekje op to herbouw van de "family altar" en wij hopen van harte, dat deze oproep weerklank zal vinden.

D.F.

★
★ ★

C. PARLEVLIET

Niagara Falls

IMPORTEUR VAN

SEA GULL

HOLLAND HERRING

WENST ALLEN

een Gezegend Kerstfeest

EN EEN

Voorspoedig 1970 toe.

In dank, voor Rev. E.O.H.

"It is well with my soul"

I had U maandenlang niet meer gezien,
U was verdwenen, Heer, ik trof U nergens,
mensen gingen me links en rechts voorbij,
ze redeneerden over God in dure woorden
en zeiden, dat als ik in U geloofde,
ik langs hun lijnen denken moest,
want daar was U,
maar toen ik met hen meedacht, aarzelend,
vond ik U niet —
anderen stopten me met lange brieven,
ze schreven, dat als ik in U geloofde,
ik in hun rijen moest marcheren en
hun doel moest delen,
want slechts daar was U,
maar toen ik had gedaan wat ze verlangden,
vond ik U niet —
toen — 't was een zondagmiddag —
klom een kleine man
de kansel op, een lach op zijn gezicht,
en praatte over God in simpele woorden,
termen van alledag, taal zonder franje,
recht uit een open hart,
dat in U jong durft zijn,
hij deed geen moeite om me te bekeren
tot wat hij zag als een verheven zaak,
en telde niet, dat ik al jaren lid ben
van de gemeente, waarin hij Uw woord bracht,
nee, stel U voor: hij was om mij bekommerd
en vroeg me op de man af of ik U ken
en of Uw kruis mij nog een loflied gaf,
hij vroeg, Heer Jezus, hoe het met mijn ziel stond
en wie in deze kille tijd mijn trooster was —
o vreugde van het onverwacht ontmoeten!
stromen van levend water welden op
en bevend zag ik U opnieuw, Bevrijder,
zoals U eens voor mij, voor alle mensen,
één goddelijk onpeilbaar medelijden,
de hel inging —
V-R-E-D-E spelt Uw verrukkelijke naam! ik dank U,
dat U een nieuw lied op mijn lippen legde,
dat U mij weer, voor de zoveelste maal,
een uitzicht schonk boven het zinneloos getwist,
waardoor ik reizen moet —
en nu vergeef me, dat ik U een gunst vraag:
laat deze dienaar van U, die gewond
terugkeerde van voor dood's zwarte poorten,
altijd, altijd, tot aan zijn laatste dag
Uw broederlijke glimlach verder delen,
zo ongekunsteld, dat God's kinderen,
van jong tot oud, het evangelie mogen voelen
diep in hun ziel —
ja, geef hem dat hij ook aan wie nog zoeken
mag tonen, wat vandaag geloven is:
het vrolijk eind van dorre eenzaamheden,
lofzangen met een beat, een gul en eerlijk leven
uit God's vergiffenis —
Heer, zegen hem! o laat Uw heilige Geest
ons mèt hem lachen leren, onbevreesd.

Edmonton, Alta. **Tini Van Ameyde**

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FROM PULPIT AND PEW

PAGE OF INFORMATION ON CHURCH LIFE - FOR THE REFORMED COMMUNITY

EDITED BY REV. F. GUILLAUME

THE GOD OF WONDERS

Christmas shows us the God of wonders. We are not able to enjoy the richness of Christmas in its fulness if we overlook or underestimate the wonder which is presented to us.

God being revealed in the flesh — God assuming our human nature — God living in Mary's womb and being born of her as a fragile child — this is just beyond our understanding. We kneel down in awe, and prostrate we adore. "Undoubtedly the mystery of our religion is a great wonder — God was made visible in human form" (1 Tim. 3:16 in the translation by Charles B. Williams).

Imagine a moment that this would have been the only wonder God ever performed, that without any preparation God suddenly would have announced that His only Son would become man . . . Well, we simply would have been completely unable even to believe such an event.

But God's manner of treating us is completely different. He does not want to dumbfound us on Christmas but to satisfy us with His glorious salvation, which He had prepared for all who would believe in Him.

The God of wonders performed the Incarnation after He had taught His people His omnipotence during all the centuries which followed His first triumphant promise in Paradise. The overwhelming flood of wonders which was to come started slowly: Enoch left this world miraculously and when Noah had entered the ark with all the beings God had commanded him to take along, God Himself closed the entrance behind him. Both miracles pointed emphatically to Jesus Christ. Abraham and Sara received a son in their old age. Isaac became rich by the wonders of God's hand and Jacob experienced that he had to do with a wonderful God. But the divine wonders began to multiply in the deliverance of Israel from Egypt and in the nation's travels through the desert to Canaan. The coming Saviour was shown to them in all the wonders of God's hand. The Lord called His Son out of Egypt and surrounded Him with the miracles of His love.

We should realize that all God's wonders taught the people to expect the wonder of wonders. This means that every miracle which took place in the Old Testament served that purpose. All of them together show the exact God-painted picture of the appearance of God's Son in the flesh.

Did you ever read Luke 1 and 2 with that consideration in mind? These chapters are first filled with deep adoration because of the breathtaking wonders which happened in and around the birth of Christ.

During Jesus' stay on earth hundreds and thousands of wonders took place every day. He Himself was there, God, walking and talking and acting as man. After Jesus' triumphant walk on the raging waves the clear fulfillment of the Old Testament wonders was reached in the spontaneous confession, "Of a truth thou art the Son of God!"

Following Christ's resurrection and ascension into heaven, the apostles received the Holy Spirit who gave them power to do the one miracle after the other. The preaching of the gospel had to be underlined. The central wonders God had done in Christ had to be remembered and the church had to learn the deep truth that God had become man to save us from our sins.

When Scripture, the word of God became complete, the wonders could now disappear because the church could become mature, having learned to live with the Word and to serve God on the basis of the Word which had been given to them.

✠

We should learn to use our faith in the God of wonders. There is nothing impossible for Him. Only in relation to the return of Christ and for the coming of God's Kingdom. The God of wonders has revealed and will reveal Himself again, if necessary. People in mission fields and people being persecuted because of their faith have experienced it. God alone knows where and how to perform wonders in these last days.

But we have to live and to die by faith, which is founded upon the true Word of God. Adore on Christmas your mighty God of wonders.

And if you look sharply at your own life and your personal experiences, isn't it true that you too must say, "My God is leading me in a miraculous way!"?

CHRISTMAS

Sometimes the word used to be spelled Christ*mes*. In Dutch it is Kerst*mis*. Mis or mes, (mas) comes from the Latin verb mittere, to send. Think of the term dismissal in the liturgy: the service comes to a close and the people are *sent* home.

So Christmas reminds us that *Christ* was *sent* into this world.

SCANNER

PRAYERS FOR CHRISTMAS AND OLD AND NEW YEAR

LORD, make me an instrument of Your peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; and where there is sadness, joy.

Attributed to
Saint Francis of Assisi.

O DIVINE MASTER, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love; for it is in giving that we receive; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

Attributed to
Saint Francis of Assisi.

★

"The Sign Of Times" carried a long article for Christmas from which I quote the wellknown

STORY OF THE OTHER WISE MAN

by Henry VanDyke.

Before ever he was able to keep tryst with his fellow-Magi in his search for "the Prince and the mighty brightness," Artaban was hindered by his deed of mercy to whatever to give him in return save the knowledge that He whom Artaban sought would be born in Bethlehem. So because his horse was spent and his would-be companions with their caravan had already gone, he must needs spend a third of his gift for the Heaven-sent One on camels that he might continue his journey at all.

Even then, when he came to Bethlehem, he was too late. The only strangers there were Herod's brutal soldiery, snatching and slaying wherever an infant could be found. But one was saved, at the price of the second third of Artaban's treasure.

"For the prudent captain who will leave me in peace," said Artaban, while the mother hugged her child to herself and crouched behind the door. The captain stretched out his hand and took the ruby. "March on," he commanded his men, "the house is still. There is no child here."

"The Lord bless thee, and keep thee," cried the mother to her child's deliverer: "the Lord make His face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: the Lord lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace."

So, his sapphire gone for camels, his ruby for the life of a child, Artaban had but a pearl remaining, and through the long years he sought the Lord, the pearl becoming more luminous as he carried it continually close to the warmth of his beating heart. Until, at last, in Jerusalem, he was caught in the throng pressing on toward a place called Golgotha to witness the death of One who was called the King of the Jews. (Could this good man be the King for whom the pearl glowed in his bosom?) Maybe it was for this reason that his search had lasted so long. That the pearl might save Him from the tree. Hope lent haste to his weary feet. But he neither saw the King nor was able to make that redeeming transaction. Never had his pearl looked so beautiful, but it went, and only in the nick of time, to buy the freedom of a beautiful girl seized for a slave in payment of her dead father's debt. However, even as Artaban laid his treasure in the girl's grateful hands, the sky darkened, the earth trembled, and the walls of the houses rocked to and fro. A heavy tile shaken from a roof struck the old man on the temple, and the young woman thought he must surely have been killed. But as she bent over him, his lips moved; and, as though making a reply, his voice whispered, "Not so, my Lord . . . . Three and thirty years have I looked for Thee; but I have never seen Thy face nor ministered to Thee, my King."

And now the girl did hear another voice, clear and far away, "Verily I say unto thee, Inasmuch as thou hast done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, thou hast done it unto Me."

The "Sign of Times" carried also a Christmas poem:

CHRISTMAS EVE
by Josephine Millard

May every candle cast a glow
Upon the soft and drifted snow.
'Tis Christmas Eve across the land
Where stately trees in silence stand.

May every heart awake and sing
As angels come again to bring
Their midnight message to all men
That Christ was born in Bethlehem.

And may we see, where'er we are,
The brightness of that shining star
That moved across the midnight way
To show men where the Saviour lay.

May every carol that we hear
Bring us the tidings loud and clear
That through the Saviour's holy birth
Came love and hope for all the earth.

In the Bridge, monthly journal of the Edmonton Christian Reformed Churches, an excellent report appeared, written by Rev. John Vriend of Lethbridge, from which I quote a few parts:

THE SECOND ALL ALBERTA CHRISTIAN REFOMED MINISTERS' RETREAT

Mount St. Francis Retreat, ideally situated in the rolling ranch and woodlands west of Calgary, was the scene of another Retreat for the C.R. Ministers of Alberta. This year's retreat was another unforgettable experience.

Where else can you hear twenty-two Christian Reformed ministers singing "be-oot-i-ful!", with liturgical fervor and frequency, over balls that curve graciously or otherwise over the base-plates of a ballfield? Where else would you expect to find that many pastors coming together professionally and yet with complete self-abandon and openness to consider the future of the Chr. Ref. Church?

That evening, seated in a close circle in the Retreat's Reading Room, Rev. H. De Bolster confided to us his hopes and fears for the future of the Christian Reformed Church. We grieved over the lack of open lines of communication, the fossilization of thought in places high and low, the lack of theological direction on many concrete issues. We worried over developments in The Netherlands and puzzled over developments at home. In short, no can of worms was too slippery for us to open.

Relief was needed, and promptly came, in the form of a farewell address by the Rev. C. Padmos, pastor-elect of the Geref. Church of Maasland, The Netherlands. He dwelt fondly on the Southern defeat of the day and proposed a Padmos Memorial Trophy to give permanent expression to his own link with this historic event in the world of sports.

Thursday morning saw another highlight of the Retreat: a full-dress discussion of the Youth of the Church. Youth's alienation, youth's clear-eyed view of adult phoniness, youth's blind spots, you name it, we talked about it.

The Retreat is over. The spirit of it can only be described as excellent. The value of it, the future alone can tell.

J. Vriend.

HITHER and YON

LOVE BETWEEN SISTER CHURCHES
Maranatha's new Church

The consistory at its last meeting has decided to present a special gift to the Maranatha's almost completed church edifice. This gift will consist of a chancel pulpit at the cost of $600.00 and will be a token of the fact that we as Rehoboth share in Maranatha's joy.

Bowmanville, Ont.
Rehoboth C.R.C.

★

STILL IN TROUBLE WITH DUTCH

After reading some appeals from older members of the church, the consistory decided to rescind its decision re the Dutch service. From now on the Dutch service will be held regularly again on the First Sunday of the month in the evening. The consistory, however, felt it to be necessary to also have a second English service on that day. For a trial period of 6 months this service will be held at 3:00 p.m. in the afternoon.

Orillia, Ont. C.R. Church.

★

Willowdale, Ont. C.R.C. will get a different church directory next year:

A NEW CHURCH DIRECTORY WITH PHOTOS: A year ago our Church Directory was new and up to date. Would you believe that my directory has about 65 changes in the membership list, changes of address, or telephone, or additions by public Confession of Faith, or moving out or moving into our congregation? We need a new directory again. So it happened that a printing company approached our consistory to provide us with a directory that would include photographs of every family and single member without any cost. We thought this might be a sales gimmick. We were assured however that no one would be bothered for buying pictures. We made sure also by contacting the Second C.R.C. where the same company has taken care of a year book or directory. This church was completely satisfied. So we decided to go ahead on the offer.

Indeed we need your cooperation. We have long wanted to have a yearbook with photos of the members and families. That way we get to know each other. We thought that it would be too costly. Now it need not cost us a penny. Perhaps you think personally that this whole picture-taking-business is nonsense. Even if you do, please cooperate because the whole undertaking is quite worthless if we do not all cooperate.

The following was reported by the VanderSteen's in Nigeria to their home Church in St. Catharines (Maranatha C.R.C.).

We are happy to report that the work of our Mission is being blest by God. Despite difficulties brought about by the Civil War we are able to continue the building of the Hospital and all of our institutions continue to operate. In the month of September many of the churches baptized the adult converts that had completed their three years of Catechism instruction. In the immediate Gboko-Mkar area there were over 200. It was a thrilling experience for us to see so many being baptized. We visited the Leprosy Settlement church because our houseboy was amongst the new converts that were baptized there. In his group was an old leprosy patient who chose the Christian name of Lazarus. His greatest joy will come in living with Christ in the life hereafter.

The Call for 1970

The Divine Challenge

Hear your commission, O church of the Master!
Friends and disciples of Jesus, take heed.
How are you doing the work of the Father?
How are you caring for hunger and need?

Useless to stay in your doorway and beckon —
Those who need most will never come in;
Fighting the devil with creed and with cultures —
How we must laugh at his stronghold of sin!

Go — to the sheep that are scattered and fainting,
Having no shepherd, and tell them to come;
Go — to the highways, and tell every creature
Still the feast waiteth, and yet there is room.

Go — the time shortens, the night is approaching,
Harvests are whit'ning and reapers are few;
Somewhere perhaps, in the darkness are dying,
Souls that might enter the kingdom with you.

Go — church of God — for He goeth before you.
And all the way ye take He doth know.
On the bright morrow He'll say, "Come, ye blessed,"
But till the dawning the message is "Go!"

From St. Catharines
(Maranatha C. R. Church)

TRY IT

No. 10

Christmas in a foreign language becomes a prophet if you change one letter.
Solution No. 9:

PASTOR (or past)

United we stand

This is what became evident within the first 15 minutes or so of the Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools Fall Meeting. After an unsuccessful attempt to put some business on the floor that the Board had ruled out of order, it took a Roll Call vote which overwhelmingly upheld the Board's decision, that the meeting got down to business and set the pace for a very good and informative meeting, under the capable leadership of the new chairman, John DeBoer.

This meeting was held on Saturday, November 29, in the Hebron Christian Reformed Church, Whitby, Ontario, the home town of the former world champion hockey team, Whitby Dunlops. 91 school board members, 25 teachers represented 42 Christian School societies.

Also present were a representative of the Administrators' Association and one from the Ontario Christian School Teachers' Association, and two National Union of Christian Schools board members.

We were welcomed and led in opening devotions by the pastor of the Hebron Church, Rev. C. Tuyl.

A long and full Agenda was before the meeting. The financial report was thoroughly discussed and much concern was expressed because some societies are far in arrears in paying their fees for both general and equality funds and as a result, they lost their voting rights.

Another item of concern was brought up by the Education Committee namely, that the number of male classroom teachers has decreased again this year by another 10% and now only contributes 23% towards the total number of classroom teachers. We hope that the scholarship program for the training of new teachers may in some measure help to rectify this situation. We found that this year 82 teachers did not return to our schools, for various reasons. This represents approximately 25% of the total teaching staff and means that the schools have to re-hire new and inexperienced teachers. This was one of the reasons that the Committee strongly recommended that the school visiting program, carried out by the Educational Director, Mr. A. Hengstman, be continued and that on a priority basis.

For the first time this year, the National Union of Christian Schools — Canada Group insurance has been instituted and has a 50% participation. It protects both the teacher and the school for long-term disability and this is a matter that certainly deserves everyone's consideration.

The Summer Course Committee rendered a most encouraging and enthusiastic report in that it had its biggest enrolment ever this summer, was almost completely self-supporting, and comments like, "Now I understand more fully the importance of Christian Education," or, "I am now able to evaluate much better our task as Christian teachers with a more Scriptural view," make us agree with the comment of one student, 'We urge the Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools to continue offering these courses."

Mr. John Olthuis, half-time employee of the Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools, working towards equality, gave a very informative and encouraging report and told us that our aim toward equality is an on-going program and that much of the work has to be done by the local congressman, and school boards were requested to make sure that their congressman is in contact with his local M.P.P. and regional school boards, both public and separate. He related to us some very encouraging reaction from M.P.P.'s, both conservative and liberal. He read some correspondence that proved that progress is being made and that there is a growing awareness among the M.P.P.'s of our problem. We are thankful for the good work being done in this field and hope that the time may soon arrive, that some measure of equality may be attained.

The Constitution Committee's report was thoroughly debated, that is Art. 2, The Basis, and this shows that our school board members are indeed concerned as to the Basis on which we stand. Unfortunately, however, through a technicality and a shortage of time, Art. 3, dealing with the aims and objectives of the Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools, did not get discussed at all and will have to wait until the Spring meeting, when a further report is expected.

The proposed, recommended Salary Schedule received a few comments and from it we learn that for next September, the beginning teachers may all receive a healthy increase of $600.00 in the starting salary for Category I, somewhat less in the other categories.

A report on the National Union of Christian Schools was rendered by one of our N.U.C.S. board members. He highlighted for us the Convention and also drew our attention to the new constitution, in particular the Basis, which was adopted provisionally for one year. Boards were asked to send comments to the Committee, c/o National Union of Christian Schools Office. They should do so immediately as the Committee will want to report to the February National Union of Christian Schools meeting. Also, next year is the 50th anniversary of the N.U.C.S. The Convention will be held in Chicago and our school boards were encouraged to send a delegate.

The meeting decided to incorporate the publication of the Christian School Herald with the Christian Home and School, the official publication of the National Union of Christian Schools. The reasons given for this were increase and cost and duplication of material. In return, we will receive a larger magazine with the assurance of the N.U.C.S. that they will make the magazine as international as possible and make space available for editorials, news, etc. to us.

After a full day meeting, in which many old friends met, a delicious dinner was enjoyed, it was adjourned with rendering thanks to God, who grants us the opportunity to be busy in this phase of his Kingdom.

Bert Osterbrook.

STAMPS FOR LITERATURE

It has been sometime since you heard from us. We had a very busy Summer and the shipments of literature have not let up during the Fall. In the past four months, over 12.000 books have been sent to Latin America.

Our income has been very low, but we praise the Lord that we have not had to go into debt. As the monies were needed the Lord provided, either from sales of stamps, or through generous gifts from many of you.

As many of you already know, our books are printed in Spain. God has opened a wide door in that country for proclaiming the Gospel, and we feel that we must go forward in faith and respond to this challenge.

Mrs. Vila, our three children, (Cathy 5, David and Deborah 3 year old twins) and myself will be leaving for Spain on December 10 for a 20 month stay. Apart from doing some research at the University of Madrid, I will be directly involved in the ministry of literature which is so dear to my heart, and also in the broadcasting of the Gospel in Spain itself, by radio. On account of my previous training in theology and liberal arts, I plan to be active in assisting the work of Christian education in Spain.

We do not want to give up this STAMPS FOR LITERATURE project and we shall keep in touch with you directly from Madrid, Spain. However, we have no facilities to keep stamps in Grand Rapids during our absence, so we ask you to HOLD THE STAMPS UNTIL WE RETURN. Continue saving them but *do not send them to the Post Office Box as in the past.* The stamps will be useful when we return to Grand Rapids in 1971.

The printing and distributing of literature will continue as usual since we are moving our offices to Spain. TWENTY TONS OF PAPER will be ordered shortly and 15 new titles will be printed while we are in Spain, at a cost of $4,000.00. If you can send a donation, please do so. If you cannot give, keep on saving stamps, and remember to pray that the Lord will touch the hearts of those who are able to give.

The Post Office Box will remain open in case you have questions or want to get in touch with us during these 20 months. God Bless YOU.

David Vila, Coordinator

We wensen al onze familie, vrienden en kennissen

een gezegend Kerstfeest
en
een gelukkig Nieuwjaar

Mr. en Mrs. K. MULDER.
Dunnville, R.R. I, Ont.

DATA CENTRE

December 20	London, Ont., Christmas Concert, Clark Rd. Secondary School.
December 21	Brampton Chr. Ref. Church. The Christian choirs of Brampton and Toronto present the oratoria "The Birth of Christ".
December 24	Carol Candlelight Service in Immanuel Chr. Ref. Church of Hamilton, Ont., Christmas Eve at 10 p.m. The Hamilton Chr. Choral Society will perform during service.
December 26	Weston Chr. Ref. Church, Albion Rd. The Christian choirs of Brampton and Toronto present the oratoria "The Birth of Christ".
December 27	Chr. Ref. Hockey Tournament, University of Guelph, Ont.
December 27	Toronto, Ont., Christmas Concert, Chr. Ref. Church, Rexdale.
January 3	Bowmanville, Ont., Christmas Concert, Knox Chr. School Auditorium.

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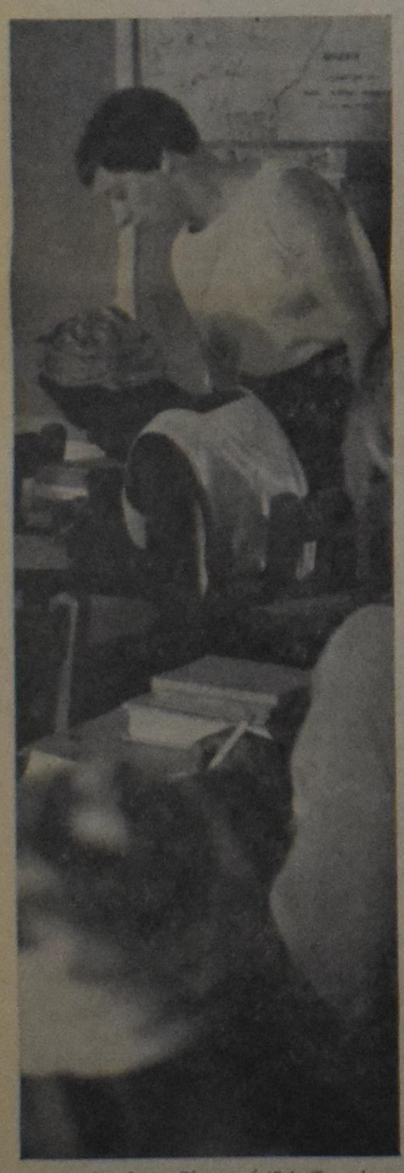

Laura Beelen, Class of '54. Teacher. Assignment: Harga, Nigeria. You're right in the middle as a mighty nation unfolds and storms toward education. Quick, Laura, teach. Teach personal hygiene. Teach sewing to the ladies. Teach boys and girls. Teach men and women to be layworkers for evangelism. Teach a full day. Teach a full week. Teach...teach ...teach...'cause you're in action...for Christ's sake!

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Christmas Concerts

BY

Christian Music Society "Euphoniae", Toronto
Christian Chamber Orchestra "Pro Musica", Toronto
Christian Mixed Choir "Praise the Lord", Toronto
Christian Children's Choir "The Lord is my Shepherd", Toronto

UNDER THE DIRECTION OF
LEENDERT KOOIJ, A.R.C.T.

London:	Saturday, December 20, 1969, 8 p.m., in the Clarke Road Secondary School, 278 Clarke Side Rd.
Toronto:	Saturday, December 27, 1969, 8 p.m. in the Chr. Ref. Church, Albion Road, Rexdale.
Bowmanville:	Saturday, January 3, 1970, 8 p.m. in the Knox Christian School Auditorium, Scuggog St.

Come, hear the music of Hasse, Torelli, Handel, Bach, Boekel, and others. Sing along with choirs and orchestra in an hour of the real Christmas spirit.

Free admission to Toronto concert, all others: Admission $1.00, $1.50 per couple, 50¢ for children.

Admission free for members of the Dutch Canadian Fellowship Association, sponsors of this program.

Tickets may be picked up in advance from:

LONDON: London Travel Bureau, 395 Dundas St., ph. 432-1141.

BOWMANVILLE: George Blyleven, R.R. 6, Bowmanville, ph. 623-5300.

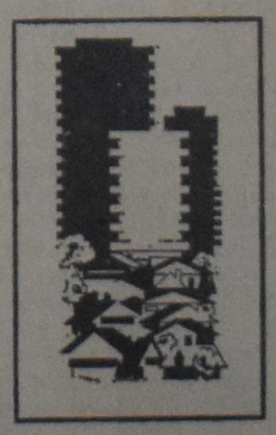
OSHAWA: Teeninga's Stores, 149 Simcoe St., ph. 725-8543.

CALVINIST - CONTACT
and
GUARDIAN PUBLISHING CO. LTD.
extend their
sincere wishes for a
Christ-centered Christmas
to all our readers
and friends.

RESTITUTIES OP HUIZENBELASTING VOOR 1969

Een speciale kennisgeving aan huurders en huisbazen

Huurders in flatgebouwen kunnen deze maand een beetje extra geld verwachten onder het restitutieschema van de Ontario Regering. Het schema verlicht de lasten der huiseigenaren en huurders met betrekking tot gemeente- en schoolbelasting. In feite betaalt de Provincie een gedeelte van de eigendomsbelasting van ieder huis of flat daarvoor in aanmerking komend.



Huurders dienen hun restituties op of voor 31 december te ontvangen. Menige huurder die vroeger in het jaar zijn woonplaats heeft verlaten zal reeds zijn restitutie hebben ontvangen.
Dit dient als volgt te geschieden:

Indien U een huisbaas bent....

Dient U de volledige restitutie aan huurders die gedurende 1969 Uw huis hebben bewoond te betalen. Betaling dient voor of op 31 december 1969 plaats te vinden.

EEN HUURDER DIE in de loop van het jaar INTROK en nog steeds in Uw pand woont dient een twaalfde van de totale restitutie voor elke maand huur te ontvangen. Dit moet voor of op 31 december worden betaald.

EEN HUURDER DIE in de loop van het jaar VERTROK dient eveneens een evenredig bedrag binnen 30 dagen vanaf de datum dat zijn huur afliep te ontvangen of op 31 december, wat het eerste komt.

Indien een huurder achterstallig is kan de belastingrestitutie van de achterstallige huur worden afgetrokken. De restitutie MOET NIET worden ingehouden als gevolg van schade of verlies.

Indien U een huurder bent....

dan dient U Uw restitutie van Uw huidige huisbaas op of voor 31 december 1969 te ontvangen. Indien U in de loop van het jaar uit een flat bent getrokken en nog niet Uw aandeel in de restitutie heeft ontvangen, dan moet U zich onmiddellijk met Uw vorige huisbaas in verbinding stellen om er zeker van te zijn dat hij weet waarheen de betaling moet worden toegezonden.

Huurders in flatgebouwen zoals duplexes en wolkenkrabbers komen gewoonlijk voor belastingrestitutie in aanmerking. Huurders van etages en souterrains in woningen zullen waarschijnlijk niet in aanmerking komen, aangezien het pand dat men huurt niet afzonderlijk wordt aangeslagen. Bij voorbeeld, kamerbewoners komen niet in aanmerking. Indien U onzeker bent omtrent Uw positie of aanspraak, stelt U zich dan in verbinding met het gemeentelijk belastingkantoor.

Indien U moeilijkheden ondervindt....

telefoneer dan Toronto 363-7501 of schrijf naar de Municipal Subsidies Branch, Department of Municipal Affairs, 801 Bay Street, Toronto 181. Ambtenaren zijn beschikbaar om U behulpzaam te zijn.

Brochures die bijzonderheden omtrent de 1969 schema voor belastingrestitutie omvatten kunnen op aanvraag worden verstrekt.

THE RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY TAX REDUCTION ACT (1968)
(as amended)

THE DEPARTMENT OF MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS
Hon. W. Darcy McKeough, Minister

A Christmas Story by Ineke Parlevliet

FOR WHOM HE CAME

The two ministers were sitting in the study of the parsonage. One pastor was young and apparently felt very much at ease in his own chair, with his long legs stretched out on a leather hassock and smoking a pipe. The blue smoke rings circled lazily away and then disappeared, but the smell of aromatic tobacco lingered in the room, making it cozy.

The late afternoon sun, coming in through a large picture window that presented a beautiful view of the colourful fall trees, brightened the dark panelled study considerably. A patch of light fell on Rev. Rootes' close cropped, reddish hair and seemed to set it afire.

Rev. O'Brien looked at him with somewhat paternal feelings. A man full of energy and boyish enthusiasm, he thought. He's anxious to serve, that's clear enough, but he is so full of plans and new ideas, that he may easily overshoot his target. Perhaps it is just as well that he is leaving his first congregation so soon. He remembered too well his own inexperience during the first year of his ministry, now more than forty years ago.

Rev. O'Brien thoughtfully asked, "How is church life?"

"Good. Faithful attendance, flourishing Bible clubs and Ladies' auxiliary, interest in Sunday school work and a pretty good relationship among the members. Of course, financially there could be some improvement, but then again, compared to other churches they aren't doing that bad either as far as their giving is concerned."

He sounds like a salesman, Rev. O'Brien thought. He's really trying to sell me his congregation. Never heard of such a problemless congregation before!

"So everything is just fine here in Whitewood," Rev. O'Brien remarked. "No trouble shooters at all who often cause a lot of damage."

"Well, no trouble shooters at all . . . perhaps that's an overstatement," Rev. Rootes answered; his face became serious. "We have a few members who need some special attention — and care, I would say. But with some tact you can achieve much. The one I have mainly in mind is Shriner, a man in his late forties, married and father of one child, a son. This boy attends university and is hardly ever home. Not many kids here have the opportunity to receive higher education and Shriner seemed very proud that his son is one of the few who does. Now Shriner has some money and is the little big shot in town. About three years ago, he had an accident on a neighbour's farm — Groleau. I don't know all the details, but anyhow Shriner blamed Groleau, who accidentally was Roman Catholic, for his injuries. He was handicapped for life, sued Groleau, won the case and received $60,000. Groleau had to sell his farm to meet his financial obligations and soon moved away to take a job in some city plant. Apparently it had been quite a case at that time and the whole village was sharply divided in pros and cons concerning Groleau and Shriner. Our congregation seemed to have sided as one man with Shriner. Anyhow, since that black day Shriner has been sitting home, rubbing his sore chest and being a nuisance to his wife. He spends some time on a stamp collection, takes long walks. However, for the rest he's trying to rule every organization and each committee of which he is a member. He seems to be a very determined man, full of religious zeal and I have to admit, in many ways he sets a good example for the congregation, but he's not easy to work with, and has a great influence on the others. Yet he's always there, whether you need him or not. I've been managing to get along quite well with him, with one of my tactics being never to oppose him openly."

"And how do you do that?" A shadow of a smile played on Rev. O'Brien's lips, but his colleague didn't notice it.

"Let me give you an example," Rev. Rootes said eagerly. "Last year the congregation wanted to make money for the sole purpose of buying a bell for our church tower. Those things cost a scandalous lot of money, but they were full of ideas as how to achieve their goal. Shriner especially was pushing the idea with all his might. The story behind it was that just previous to this the Catholic church in Skobi had bought a bell, which could be heard lor long distances. This bell was a fresh thorn in the flesh of our congregation and the only way to pull the thing out was by buying a bigger and better bell for our church. The whole issue was, of course, pure jealousy and ridiculous, but if I had said so aloud, I would've caused a tumultuous storm of which the end wouldn't have been in sight for years. Instead I said nothing, but rather started a series of sermons on our missions, explaining their great need, also financially. I must confess that I made use of some sob stories, but it did the trick. When the occasion seemed ripe, I suggested to use the money drive for our mission fields instead of for the church bell. I suggested that one of our members could serve as an intermediary between that mission post and our congregation and he could more or less set up a new way of communicating and supporting. Well, Shriner bit, just as I had hoped. When he was in favour, the others didn't stay behind. In one meeting the whole thing was settled without any dark face. Shriner became M.C. — mission communicator — and less than six months later we sent $1000 to our leper hospital in the Congo. No one has ever mentioned a church bell since that time. You see what a bit of tact can accomplish," Rev. Rootes chuckled.

Rev. O'Brien didn't laugh. His clear grey eyes were drawn together by a deep frown. Tact . . . , he thought. Is that what the christian church of today needs? Tact? A Bible text flashed through his mind. "I did not come to bring peace, but a sword . . ." He sighed.

"I realize that it will be a hard decision for you," Rev. Rootes said, misinterpreting his colleague's sigh and seriousness. "The winters are long and severe here, it's no use hiding that, but the summers and the fall are lovely. As I said the people are faithful and don't present many problems. To me it just seems the right place for a minister who should retire, but feels peppy enough yet to keep on working for a while. A small congregation, basically good people and a healthy environment!" Rev. Rootes said with a broad smile.

"He's not trying to sell me his congregation," Rev. O'Brien checked himself, "but he is really convinced that Whitewood is an exceptionally good congregation. Funny, that in spite of his assurances, I get a completely different impression of the Protestant sheep here."

When Rev. O'Brien still didn't answer, Rev. Rootes continued his monologue, litting a fresh pipe.

"Perhaps Shriner is worrying you," he said, "but I might have painted his picture a bit too dark. He needs some special attention but if he were like the rest, life could be pretty dull!"

"And he's the only one who brightens things up here?"

Rev. Rootes wasn't sure whether Rev. O'Brien was sarcastic or just joking. He decided the latter was the case.

"No, there's another one — Doc. Nikolich, as they call him. A very capable doctor, who serves Whitewood quite well. He's Polish and was raised a Catholic, yet he attends our church — when he attends. Why, I really don't know. His wife, who was a Protestant, passed away many years ago, and because of her he changed churches; but not his beliefs as far as I can see. There still seems to be a lot of Roman Catholicism left in him. He's hard to talk to and to me he seems completely out of place in Whitewood. No one has really gotten very close to him, in fact he's a mystery to me and to many others."

"He's not accepted by the congregation and town people?"

Rev. Rootes shrugged his shoulders. "No . . . at least, I don't think so," he said hesitatingly. "He's so different than the population of this area . . . First of all he's a formidable man. Frank, a bit rough and candid, but not always tactful."

Rev. O'Brien smiled at that last word, but Rev. Rootes didn't notice it. "He's an excellent hunter, the best fisherman in the whole county, and skies like a professional. And he drinks. At times rather heavily. It is said that because of his drinking he made a couple of medical and social mistakes which our people can't seem to forget. He also was involved as a medical adviser in Shriner's court case, but this was before I came here and I don't know anything first hand. Stories go around and I guess it's wiser to leave them for what they are. One thing is certain: Shriner and Doc. Nikolich are no friends and never will be."

"Yet they both go to the same church . . ." Rev. O'Brien said.

Rev. Rootes was genuinely surprised. "Yes, of course . . . What else can you expect? In every congregation, regardless where, there are members which can't stand each other or who bear grudges. Suppose they all started their own denomination!"

"No, I guess that wouldn't be of much help . . . Neither would it be right."

He's a bit of a hair-splitter, Rev. Rootes thought. Getting old, too. Makes a mountain out of every mole-hill and consequently makes life harder too, for himself and others. Strange that a man like that, entitled to retire, still wants to take on another congregation . . .

For a moment an unpleasant silence lingered in the room. It was Rev. Rootes who quickly picked up the thread of the conversation again.

"Doctor Nikolich hardly attends church lately, so the difficulties are not that severe."

"Did you ask him why he doesn't come anymore?"

"As I said he's hard to talk to and doesn't seem to welcome visits. Once he told me that I couldn't tell him more than a couple of my sermons had already done."

For the first time Rev. O'Brien laughed aloud. Rev. Rootes blushed a bit uncomfortably, again not sure as to how to take his colleague's reaction.

"He indeed seems to be a different type of man!", Rev O'Brien said, still smiling. "I don't think your tact-technique works well with him!"

"No, it doesn't." It sounded tart.

"Cheer up, brother," Rev. O'Brien said. "I didn't mean to offend you. On the contrary, I'm getting more and more interested in your congregation and might even want to take on the job."

"That sounds great," the young minister answered with sudden enthusiasm. "I've told my calling congregation that I could not accept their call until I could leave my congregation here in other faithful hands. This congregation can't stand on its own legs. It needs guidance. Since there is no other minister around in the near and far neighbourhood to keep an eye on them, I feel doubly responsibly."

"A great virtue," Rev. O'Brien said, nodding in approval.

Was it meant as a compliment? Seeing the winning smile on the kind, intelligent face across from him, Rev. Rootes decided it was.

"Within a week I hope to inform you about my decision," Rev. O'Brien said, getting up to leave.

"I pray that it will be a favourable one," Rev. Rootes said hopefully.

Five days later he received a letter from Rev. O'Brien, stating that because of the conflicts in the congregation of Whitewood, he felt he should accept the call. The letter puzzled Rev. Rootes greatly. Somehow Rev. O'Brien must have misunderstood me, he thought; I was sure I'd convinced him what a pleasant and easy congregation I had . . .

But then the joy that another minister would take over and release him to go to the city, where his talents would be more appreciated, took possession of him. He whistled a happy tune on his way to his study to start the first preparations for his leave.

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Rev. O'Brien rang the bell of Dr. Nikolich's bungalow. After having seen the doctor among the congregation members at his first church service, Rev. O'Brien had called him to set a date for an acquaintance visit. The doctor had been quite agreeable and had asked him to come tonight. Curiosity mingled with interest about this remarkable man, made Rev. O'Brien feel anxious to meet him.

A middle aged woman, deprived of all feminine beauty and charm, opened the door.

"The doctor is expecting you," she said in a businesslike tone. "You can go into the livingroom. The doctor will be right with you. He's attending another patient at the moment."

Rev. O'Brien bit his lip so as not to betray his fun. No doubt this woman was a veteran of a nurse for whom no people existed but her patients, as her slip of the tongue had indicated.

She showed the minister into a large, cozy livingroom, which was obviously furnished according to a man's taste. A set of armchairs was arranged around an open fireplace in which some fir logs crackled pleasantly, spreading a comfortable warmth. Over the fireplace hung a set of moose antlers. The hide, which apparently belonged to the moose, served as a rug in front of the open hearth. A beautiful soap-stone carving, presenting an Eskimo woodcutter, was the only ornament which decorated the chimney-piece. On the walls were a few oil paintings and a large, coloured map. Rev. O'Brien came closer and saw that it was the map of Poland.

Then, turning around, Rev. O'Brien saw the chess board with a few pieces left on it. His interest was suddenly aroused. Deep in his heart he had a great passion for this noble game and he had always regretted that in his old congregation he had never been able to find an equal partner. Quickly his eyes went over the disposition of the pieces. Both white and black had a bishop, castle and pawn to support their king. Black's situation seemed hopeless. Intrigued by what he saw, Rev. O'Brien went to sit down on his knees to study the problem more closely. If it was White's turn, Black would be check-mate with the next move, but if it was Black's turn . . . Soon Rev. O'Brien was deeply involved in the game. Without touching the ivory pieces, he was developing a carefully thought-out plan. Black could win . . . he had a chance, if the next move could be made by him!

Rev. O'Brien had not noticed that someone had entered the room; he only became aware of his presence when he felt someone towering over him. He looked up with an intent expression on his face.

"Tell me," he said eagerly. "Whose turn is it?"

"Black's."

"Good! Sit down!", Rev. O'Brien pointed Nikolich to a chair at the other side of the board. "Okay if I play Black?"

Doctor Nikolich nodded. "You're in a desperate situation, my friend. But go right ahead!" His steel-blue eyes sparkled with pleasure and anxiety to accept the offered challenge. They played for almost an hour, without speaking except for an occasional grunt. A smile of triumph crossed Rev. O'Brien's face.

"Check-mate, doctor."

With a deliberate move doctor Nikolich put his king flat on the board. "He fought an honest battle," he said, almost caressing, "and he died an honourable death, for who is able to withstand such an opponent?" He got up and gave Rev. O'Brien a friendly tap on the shoulder, which the latter felt down to his toes.

"That was a problem of my chess magazine," the doctor said, "White check-mate in five moves, but I hadn't been able to solve it. You did it in an hour! Life is good! Who would have dreamed that our new minister should turn out to be a chess genius and my new challenger?"

Only now did Rev. O'Brien come back to earth and realize how strange and impolite he had behaved. He scrambled up from his painful position, rubbed his numb legs and said:

"I'm terribly sorry. My name is Mac O'Brien . . ."

"My name is Aleksander Nikolich . . ."

They shook hands and then they both bursted out laughing, because of the comical situation.

"I thought already you were the new minister, "Doc Nikolich grinned. "You seemed somehow familiar to me . . ."

"And I figured you were Old Doc," the minister said. "You look like the description I got about you . . ."

Then they laughed again like little school children who were sharing a secret.

"Let's have a drink," Doc Nikolich said. "This is an occasion that calls for a celebration. A glass of wine? I've got some extraordinary Beaujolais . . ."

Rev. O'Brien hesitated. He wasn't used to drink, except on feast days. But then this was a special celebration . . . However, would it be wise to accept a drink, be it just a glass of wine? If the doctor was really a heavy drinker . . .

Doc. Nikolich saw his embarrassment.

"Don't feel guilty, Father. Wasn't Jesus' first miracle the changing of water into wine? I'm sure He drank some, too."

Rev. O'Brien smiled. "I don't think that this particular story has been recorded for the sake of advertising wine or other drinks," he said. "In my opinion it teaches us the holiness of the marriage bond and also that a christian may or rather should enjoy the good things of this earth and be alive with joy and merriment."

"Perhaps you should preach your next sermon about that chapter."

"Why? Are the marriages that fragile here?"

"That I don't know, but your flock could certainly use some doses of joy and merriment, to use your words. The people are as pious here as a convent full of monks and nuns — separate convents, of course," he said quickly when he saw a twinkle of amusement in Rev. O'Brien's eyes, "but don't lift up heir masks! They feel so darned superior above the French people here, and so self-righteous and sure about themselves, that it's hard for me to communicate with them. I gladly attend to their sick. That's my profession and duty and it doesn't make much difference to me if I like them or not, but I would rather put up with the hard living French than with these smug-smoothed faced Pharisees."

Doc Nikolich picked up the wine bottle, with a gesture asked if Rev. O'Brien wanted some more and when the pastor shook his head, the doctor poured himself another glass, and emptied it at one draught. He wiped his mouth with his sleeve. His face expressed bitterness and anger.

Rev. O'Brien looked at him with amazement. He was stunned that in a matter of a counple of minutes a jovial, friendly man could change so quickly into an almost different personality. What was behind this all? What had the people done to him? Or perhaps he to the villagers? Questions popped up in Rev. O'Brien's head, but he didn't utter them. He just kept quiet, as he always did when he needed time to think.

"Sorry, that I let myself go," doc Nikolich said in a completely different tone. "That's how I am. Can't even contol my own temper. I say things that I should keep for myself. It's unfair to give you my opinion about your congregation members. You should find out for yourself, and will too. Your predecessor thought the world of them. He never dug deeper than the surface. Not a bad man, no. Eloquent speaker, but no experience, no wisdom. Book knowledge. Not a clue as to how wicked man basically is. For we all are . . ."

For a while it was quiet in the room. Doc Nikolich threw a new log on the now smouldering fire. Slowly is caught fire.

"You said "your congregation," Rev. O'Brien said softly. "Aren't you a member of that same congregation?"

"Yes, officially I am, but with my heart, no. But I want to belong somewhere and that's why I joined. A man without religion doesn't exist. A man without a church feels lost."

"Aren't you originally Roman Catholic?"

"Yes, true again. My wife was Protestant, so I changed. After her death I've been thinking to go back to the Mother Church, but I couldn't. There are too many things, dogmatically and socially which I cannot accept anymore. Have you ever seen the fabulous splendour of Rome's cathedrals? And two yards away the misery of an old nun who has to beg for food? Have you ever read something more ridiculous than that the Virgin's mother must have been a virgin, too? How far do they plan to go back? Have you ever heard anything more magic than that a whole rosary of penitential prayers will make you at peace with God again? You should hear the people mumble on their knees! They don't even know anymore themselves what they are saying and praying!"

"I see what you mean . . ." Rev. O'Brien said thoughtfully. "But you belong to our church for negative reasons. I hope that one day you will see the positive ones, too. As long as you look at the people, and not at Christ, you won't find your peace in our church either."

Doc Nikolich looked up with a questioning expression on his face. He opened his mouth to say something, then closed it. Rev. O'Brien did not encourage him.

"Tell me something about yourself," he asked instead. "You came from Poland. When was this?"

"Right after the war . . . When the Nazis invaded my country, I was in the army and made a prisoner of war. I knew the outcome: Death. So I tried to escape and I succeeded. That's a separate story, too lengthy and painful to tell now. Perhaps some other time. Anyway, I joined the Allies and when the war was won, I didn't want to go back to Poland, not as long as it was under communistic regime. I came to Canada, picked up my medical studies again, — I had my degree already, but had to get my Canadian licence — and worked and lived in Toronto. That's where I met my wife, a beautiful, sophisti-

cated woman, whom I should never have married. We just didn't match. She loved the city with all its theatres, shops and libraries. I hated it. I longed for the stretched-out country side of Poland, where I used to hunt and fish . . . Where a man can be alone with the wind and the water and yet feel an intense part of all mankind. In the big cities it is the opposite. You always feel alone amidst a big crowd of people. I couldn't be myself there.

There was another conflict. We had no children. I'd always wanted a son. I had hoped that perhaps one day Poland would be free again and worthy of her name. Then my son would go back and realize the dream which I had had for my country, but which I never could fulfil. A comparatively small operation could have enabled my wife to bear me children. However, she refused. Was afraid. Afraid to die. She was willing to adopt a boy, but that was not what I wanted. I wanted my own son. In this way we deprived each other of much happiness. Neither of us would give in and, as a result, our marriage went on the rocks. It was a mess and it would've ended in a divorce most likely if she hadn't died of cancer. That was ten years ago. Right after that I left the city, and came out here."

"And are you happy here?"

Doc Nikolich gave a short, sarcastic laugh. "Happiness is not a matter of a beautiful country side and peaceful surroundings. It's a matter of what lives in a man's heart. You must know that, Father. And man is his own greatest enemy. You must know that, too . . ."

He poured himself another drink, without offering any to the minister. The old-fashioned wall clock struck twelve melodious notes. Quickly Rev. O'Brien got up. That late!

The men shook hands. "Come back again for a game of chess . . . and a talk," Doc Nikolich said.

"I gladly will," Rev. O'Brien answered and for these men their goodbye words were sincere and hopeful.

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Rev. O'Brien had many difficulties with Shriner. From the very first things seemed to have gone wrong. It didn't even have anything to do with church work, but plainly with Shriner's wife. While visiting the Shriner's home, the minister had noticed how pale and tired Mrs. Shriner looked.

"It's my stomach," she complained. "Something is wrong it seems."

Must be an ulcer, Rev. O'Brien thought. The most healthy woman would get stomach trouble with a domineering and self-pitying husband around the whole day, who couldn't even hammer a nail in the wall, because of his chest injuries.

"Nonsense," replied Shriner. "There's nothing wrong with you at all. You just shouldn't eat those spicy cookies of Janice."

"I never ate them . . . I refused, because I knew it would make me feel worse."

Shriner shook his head, and said apologetically to Rev. O'Brien: "Women are incorrigible! When they have a sweet tooth, not one cookie is safe for them!"

"Perhaps there is something wrong with her stomach," the minister answered. "She doesn't look well at all and seems rather underweight to me. Why don't you send her to the doctor?"

"No, I know my wife. She's always been skinny. And I know what I'm talking about. She's just tired. She went to bed too late last night because of that bake-sale in the church." Shriner was very much irritated and Rev. O'Brien cut his visit short, planning to come back when Mrs. Shriner would be alone. That woman was sick without doubt. Perhaps he could ask Doc Nikolich to stop in one of these days.

"I'm sorry, I can't do that." Doc Nikolich said, when Rev. O'Brien asked him a few days after. "I would gladly take care of the woman and I'm convinced that she has an ulcer, for I've attended her for quite a while, but without her own or her husband's consent I can't do a thing. She's too afraid of her husband to speak for herself and Shriner would rather see her die than call me."

"That's a very tough statement."

"Yes, it is. But I mean it. Shriner can drink my blood and I know he's scheming to work me away from here. I know too much and he also knows that I'm waiting for a chance to expose him. But I'm not afraid of him. It's only too bad that he's influencing the whole protestant bunch here and turns them into miserable, petty hypocrites . . . He's the personification of evil."

Rev. O'Brien was visibly taken aback. "But why? What has happened? What has he done?"

"I'm not telling. Dig a bit deeper than your predecessor did and soon you will find out." It sounded grim.

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Rev. O'Brien started to dig deeper into the souls of his congregation members. Soon he detected a false note in some seemingly innocent gossip after a church service or meeting. The name of Dr. Nikolich kept on popping up and the expression on the serious and in agreement looking faces of the men and women indicated that something was terribly wrong with the doctor. Also at home visits the minister often received unasked-for information about him.

At first Rev. O'Brien ignored the remarks as gossip, knowing that partly their stories were true, but for the rest they were exaggerated, twisted and imagined. Then, when the rumors continued and became more vicious, he tried to trace them back to their original source, and most of the time he ran into the name Shriner. It worried and upset him.

Hhe prayed a great deal for his congregation. Although the church attendance was indeed satisfactorily, Rev. O'Brien left every service again with the discouraging feeling that he was preaching for a church filled with neatly dressed fashion dolls, who listened politely with ears which didn't understand.

Every new week he was wrestling again with the problem as to what he should preach the coming Sunday. God's Word offered more sermon topics than ministers could ever preach in their lifetime, but to choose the ones which would hit home, was very difficult. He tried and tried, spending more time in his study behind his desk and or his knees than ever before.

Soon the complaints came in by telephone, anonymous letters and via the consistory. Basically they were all the same.

"You always preach about our sins," the complaints said, "and how we should live in our daily life. But we hardly ever hear you talk about God's love and mercy. We know we are sinful, but as christians we may believe that through Christ's death on the cross, they are forgiven, aren't they? Rev. Rootes could always stress that point so beautifully in his sermons. Sometimes it made the tears come to your eyes. He never preached from St. James, but you often do. We don't see the need of these sermons . . ."

And that's exactly how it is, Rev. O'Brien thought sadly. They don't want my sermons, for they don't want to be confronted with the obligation they have towards God and their fellow-man as followers of Christ. All they want is love and mercy . . . A pain killer, a first-aid in time of emergencies. They go to church, read their Bibles, talk for hours in a vainless attempt to unravel dogmatic mysteries, they organize bazaars and support mission work and what not and for the rest they sit back. They did their share! But it is not enough! He suddenly banged his fists on his desks, so that the picture of his four grandchildren dropped on the floor and cracked.

"God!", he cried desperately, "please, help me tell them that it is not enough in Your eyes . . . that You aren't satisfied with a decent social living and faithful church attendance . . . but that all You want is a change of heart . . . a heart full of only You, not hatred and jealousy."

It was Rev. O'Brien's second winter in Whitewood. The winter had started early. Already at the end of October a snow blizzard had made severe promises for the coming months.

"We don't have to worry here about getting a white Christmas," Rev. O'Brien thought with irony. "The only thing we have to worry about is getting too much of that white, fluffy stuff."

He was on his way to Skobi, where he had to pick up some books from the main post-office that he had ordered a while ago. His mind wandered back to Mrs. Shriner. Again this morning he had tried to convince her that she should see Doc Nikolich or one in Skobi, but again she had refused, not daring to act against her husband's wishes. Shriner himself hadn't been home. Visiting some people he knew in Ear Falls, a little village some sixty miles away.

Suddenly Rev. O'Brien saw a schoolgirl walking along the road. She was wearing running shoes in spite of the cold weather and snow. He had seen the girl before. She was one of those French children who attended St. Mary's school in Skobi and had to walk home after the bus had dropped her off quite some distance away yet.

In an impulse he stopped the car and offered the girl a ride, which she gladly accepted. She was a sweet little thing of about seven years old and as all true women she talked almost incessantly. She pointed to a cluster of snow-covered trees near the lake. "There's a house behind there and that's where I live."

The little shack close to the lake didn't deserve the name of house, Rev. O'Brien thought, when he dropped the girl off.

He turned the car and was just about to drive away, when his eyes caught sight of a parked car not far from the shack. There was something incongruous about it. The shining, rather new Pontiac made a strange contrast with the dilapidated house close by. Also there was something odd familiar about the car . . .

Rev. O'Brien's curiosity was aroused. He jumped out of his car and walked over to the bright-blue Pontiac. He frowned his forehead when he recognized it as belonging to Shriner. What in the world was Shriner doing around here? Rev. O'Brien felt suddenly alarmed, sensing that something was wrong. He squinted his eyes against the brightness of the snow and sun searching the deserted lake.

Rev. O'Brien's heart skipped a beat when he saw a figure half-ways the small lake, cutting the ice with heavy, vigorous strokes.

"It can't be . . ." he whispered. "It just can't be . . ." But his eyes didn't lie. Even at this distance the person of Shriner was well recognizable. Besides, his car was there. . . Visiting friends in Ear Falls! Rev. O'Brien thought angrily. Ice-fishing, that's what he's been doing today. Cutting ice with an injured chest!

The horrible truth slowly dawned on the minister's brain, although his heart still tried to refuse it. There was nothing wrong with Shriner's chest . . . it could not be! How else could he handle an axe the way he was? $60,000! And a fellow-man ruined for life . . . It was all a cheat. Suddenly Rev. O'Brien knew what certainly had caused the hostility between Dr. Nikolich and Shriner.

Sick with disgust and bitterness Rev. O'Brien drove back to Whitewood, forgetting his errand in Skobi. Instead of going home he went straight to the doctor's house.

"Doctor has his office hours," the sour, efficient nurse-home-keeper told him. "You will have to wait."

"I'll wait," Rev. O'Brien said grimly.

Less than half an hour later Doc Nikolich entered the livingroom. One look at the face of the minister told him that there was serious trouble.

"Mrs. Shriner?", he asked.

"No, her husband. I just saw him ice-fishing and cutting ice at Lake Moosegawa."

The doctor didn't reply, but went to sit down in his rocking chair.

"So, at last you know," he said slowly.

"Yes. But now I want to hear your story . . . How could this man ever win that court case? Did his injuries heal or what?"

"He wasn't injured that badly. After the accident, he started to act up. Said that he could hardly walk because of the pain in his chest. I sent him to the hospital in Skobi, where X-rays were taken. Except for some minor internal contusions there was nothing to be seen. Yet he kept on complaining. I advised him to see a specialist. He did. The report I got said the same as I already knew: Some minor injuries, but nothing of importance. Then I learned that Shriner wanted to sue Groleau. The case went to court. I was called to testify and I said my say. But Shriner's lawyer wasn't satisfied with my medical report. He started to argue about psychological matters of which he hadn't a clue, but the court was quite impressed and another medical doctor and psychiatrist were asked to examine Shriner and submit their report to the court. Their report was a blow in the face of medical science. In fact it was ridiculous. Yet it was accepted and both men — experts in crooked cases if you ask me, and I bet you that Shriner bribed them with some sweet, stinking money — also testified in person that because of the received injuries and mental shock Shriner wouldn't be able to keep his job in the lumber-mill. I protested, lost my temper and must have shouted insults to both crooks, for I was ordered to leave the court room. I made a fool of myself. If I had been able to control myself, perhaps I could've prevented this great injustice to Groleau. Since that time Shriner can drink my blood, as I've told you, for he knows that I'm just waiting for an opportunity to drag him back into court. No wonder he wants me out of his way. The only trouble is that I have nothing to do with his case. If I were Groleau I could ask for a revision of the verdict if I had sufficient proof, but I'm only an outsider and can't prove a thing . . ."

Rev. O'Brien sat motionless with his head resting in his hands. Once in a while he shook his head as in unbelief.

"Are you going to confront him with what you saw this afternoon?"

"I don't know . . . I've to think about it . . . and to pray . . ."

Doctor Nikolich poured himself a stiff drink. By now he had learned not to offer any to Rev. O'Brien.

"Why do you drink, doc?" Rev. O'Brien asked suddenly.

"Why? Because I need it. To combat mankind . . . You do it with prayers. I with booze." It sounded rude and it was meant to.

Again Rev. O'Brien was startled by the quick-changing mood of his friend. An agonized soul, searching for peace . . . Depressed and deeply worried over friend and foe, Rev. O'Brien went home where not even his wife was able to encourage or comfort him.

A few days later, still struggling for guidance, Rev. O'Brien saw Shriner coming out of the drug store. Without further thinking the minister walked up to him.

"You had better send your wife to the doctor, Mr. Shriner," he said abruptly. "She's sick and needs medical attention."

Shriner's small, pale-blue eyes narrowed. "There's nothing wrong with my wife, Rev. O'Brien," he said with feigned politeness. "Besides, I don't believe that the health of my wife is a matter of your concern. You may have some say in church matters, but not in family matters. At least not in mine."

Rev. O'Brien looked at him with difficultly concealing anger and he wondered as he had done so often lately, if Christ had really meant to love men like Shriner, too.

"You better do as I advise you," he said, "for your own benefit. Else people might start asking questions . . . By the way, I saw you ice-fishing this week. Did you catch any?"

With satisfaction Rev. O'Brien saw how Shriner paled. Without waiting for his reply Rev. O'Brien walked away. But at home he felt small and miserable. This wasn't the right way to approach Shriner . . . He had only wanted to take revenge. I'm no better than all the rest, he thought wearily.

The next day Rev. O'Brien learned that Mrs. Shriner had visited a doctor in Skobi and had to be hospitalized right away, for a stomach operation.

— — — — —

A few days later, just after supper, the telephone rang in the parsonage. Mrs. O'Brien picked it up. Her face expressed worry.

"It's for you," she said to her husband, "the hospital in Skobi."

Rev. O'Brien jumped out of his chair, throwing the newspaper which he was reading on the floor. "Mrs. Shriner . . . must be about her . . ."

The call didn't concern Mrs. Shriner, but Doctor Nikolich. Half an hour ago the doctor had been admitted to the emergency ward of the hospital. A car accident. His condition was serious.

"Yes . . . I'll come right away . . ." His face was ash-grey when he put the receiver down. He walked as in trance to the hall.

"I'll come along," said his wife. Tears stood in her eyes, but she managed to control herself.

They were still operating on the doctor when the O'Briens arrived. They waited with fear and prayer. At last the surgeon appeared.

"It's hard to say," he said, when they asked him about dr. Nikolich's condition. "He might pull through . . . but I haven't much hope. Too much is injured and broken. One thing is in his favour. He has a strong heart and was in excellent health. But again . . ." he shook his head.

"What happened?" Rev. O'Brien asked hoarsely.

"He was on his way to a patient. Some child of the French community had burned himself quite severely with boiling water. Those small country roads aren't ploughed and the road was very slippery. What exactly happened, we may never know, but he lost control of his wheel, his care skidded and banged into a tree. The front of the car seems to be a total wreck and it's hard to believe that he is still alive."

(Continued on page 10)

In de traditie van het meest vreugdevolle jaargetijde, is het mij een genoegen om in de gelegenheid te zijn om U zowel als Uw familie onze welgemeende en voortdurende beste wensen aan te bieden voor een

Gezegend Kerstfeest

en een

Vreedzaam en Voorspoedig Nieuwjaar

STEPHEN B. ROMAN

Chairman of the Board

DENISON MINES LIMITED

TORONTO, CANADA

FOR WHOM HE CAME

(Continued from page 9)

That night Rev. and Mrs. O'Brien stayed in the hospital. There were no relatives to inform and they didn't know his friends in Toronto. They felt croser to him that night than ever before.

Soon the rumour started to circulate in Whitewoods that the doctor had been drunk on the fatal night of the accident, and parents sermonized their teenage sons and pointed out the evils caused by intemperance.

Although Rev. O'Brien's congregation was shocked by the accident, the people were convinced that this was a direct punishment from God. It was better not to mention his name anymore. And so they left him to his fate. "Let's leave it to God," they said with pious faces. "He knows best."

The weeks went by with little change in Doc Nikolich's condition. He was still balancing between life and death. Rev. O'Brien visited him every day, often with his wife. They were the only visitors of the congregation.

It was the week before Christmas when Rev. O'Brien made his daily visit.

"How is he doing?", he asked the headnurse.

"He's holding his own, Reverend . . ."

Holding his own . . . The phrase got stuck in Rev. O'Brien's head. Perhaps that's what's wrong . . . He should not hold his own. No one can. Surrender to Christ. Three words, but yet the whole matter of life and death depended on them.

He entered the sick room. Doc Nikolich was awake and apparently waiting for him. Again Rev. O'Brien was shocked by his gaunt and pale appearance. It was hard to believe that this wasted human being was the same person as the energetic, healthy and vigorous doctor of a month ago.

Doc Nikolich lifted his hand to greet his old friend and then pointed to a chair.

"Sit close to me," he said. "I want to talk to you." His voice was weak and he spoke with difficulty.

Rev. O'Brien did as he asked. "What is it?", he said, knowing that the doctor always preferred to come to the point right away.

"I want to make my confession, Father."

"I have no experience of taking it, doc, but I gladly listen."

Doc. Nikolich smiled faintly. "I've no experience of making one," he said, "so it will be all right . . ." Then his smile vanished and he looked intently at the minister.

"I'm afraid . . . afraid to die . . . I've never been afraid of anybody or anything. Not even in the war. But now I am . . . There are a lot of things wrong with me, physically and morally, but above all spiritually . . . I'm scared to death . . .

"I've made a mess of my life, Father. I never knew how big a mess until I came here. Lots of time to think. No one ever comes to see me from the church, except you and your wife . . . It made me think a lot . . . I've always condemned them, so they condemn me. They are right . . . I despised their superior and self-righteous attitude . . . but at the same time I felt myself so much superior above them . . . I said that they had no compassion, but neither had I . . . at least not for them. I had no patience, no self-control . . . Bad temper. Drank too much . . . Affected my work badly . . .

I had my dreams as a young boy . . . I always wanted to be a doctor and I was going to be a good one . . . I was going to live for others . . . the good, kind, respected and blessed country doctor . . ."

Doc Nikolich coughed and his face was distorted in pain. Rev. O'Brien helped him to drink a sip of water.

"Perhaps you shouldn't talk," he said worriedly.

But the doctor shook his head. "I've got to finish . . . as long as there is time . . . I . . . I sought myself in all I did, Father. I know that now. I blamed my wife for refusing to give me the child I wanted . . . thought is was silly to be afraid of an operation . . . of death. I know better now . . . She must have had her reasons to be afraid . . . she wasn't even forty-five when she died . . .

I messed it all up, Father . . . I wish I could do it all over, but I know I can't. Tell them . . . the people — that I'm sorry . . . Shriner, too . . . I still feel justice should be done, but who am I to condemn him?

Pray for me, Father . . . Ask God to forgive me . . ."

Exhausted, the doctor closed his eyes.

"Let's pray together," Rev. O'Brien said, folding his hand over those of his friend. After praying, he opened the Bible and read: "Come unto Me, all who labour and are heavily burdened and I will give you rest . . ."

After finishing the Bible reading, Rev. O'Brien said: "Believe that Christ has forgiven you and paid for your sins, then your sins are forgiven and peace will come."

"I wish I could," whispered the doctor. "But if people can't forgive me the things I did to them, how could God forgive me? What I did to Him is so much worse . . . Messing up the life He gave me, and that of others, too . . ."

"But God's love is so much greater," the minister said. "It's so great that we will never understand it . . ."

— — — — —

It was a few days before Christmas. Rev. O'Brien was pacing the floor of his study.

For weeks he had been trying to make a Christmas sermon and still he hadn't one word on paper, or worse, in his head. As soon as he sat down and wanted to make some notes in reference to the Christmas story and its deep meaning, he saw the faces of his congregation members in front of him: stubborn, tight-lipped, self-assured, condemning.

He had told them about Doc Nikolich, but it hadn't made much of an impression on them that the doctor felt sorry for his shortcomings and behaviour. That's easy to say, they said, but if you have a baby like the Puttick's who is defected because the doctor bungled its Caesarian birth, then words become very cheap with little meaning.

Rev. O'Brien hadn't asked them to visit the doctor. If they don't go by themselves they don't have to go at all. But his heart was bitter and sad. Above all he was deeply worried over his friend, who still struggled to find his God and still tried to measure His love with a human yardstick.

"Please, God," Rev. O'Brien prayed, "send him a sign that he is forgiven . . ."

Mrs. O'Brien entered his study: "Would you like your coffee in here?"

"No . . . I'll have it with you in the livingroom."

"Got a start with your sermon?"

"No. It just won't come. I think I'll have to leave it to God what to say on Christmas morning . . ."

— — — — —

Then it was Christmas. The weather was beautiful. Cold and frosty, but sunny. The snow glittered and sparkled like jewels and nature was on her very best. So were the people. They flocked to the church in their best outfits and in high spirits. Christmas was the most special day of the whole year. For weeks the women had been busy to decorate their homes and the church, to bake and cook, sew and clean.

The church looked festive and inviting with its large Christmas tree and many candles. The children's choir would sing and after the service they all would have coffee and Christmas cake in the meeting-hall. At home the festivities would continue amidst relatives or friends. For once the congregation was eagerly awaiting Rev. O'Brien's sermon.

But when he entered the auditorium the congregation gazed with disbelief and disappointing to the minister. Why wasn't he wearing his toga? The people started to whisper and to consult each other.

Rev. O'Brien slowly climbed the few steps to the pulpit, then he waited until it was very still. Only now the congregation noticed how pale and weary the minister looked. Then they heard his voice, which betrayed his great emotion.

"You've come here for a Christmas service and a Christmas sermon," he said, "but there won't be any . . ."

A shock of consternation went through the church and several people craned their necks to hear the explanation of this startling information.

"It is Christmas today," the minister went on in a quivering voice, "the celebration of Christ's birth, the greatest event in history. The Son of God came from heaven to save sinners . . . He came only for people who needed Him, who cried for Him, for outcasts, prostitutes, drunkards . . . for every one who knew of himself that he was a nothingness in God's holy eyes. For those He came . . . but He did not come for you . . ." The last words were a mere whisper, yet they seemed to fill the church to its far corners.

It was dead quiet. No one stirred, no one spoke or coughed. Even the small children didn't dare to move. Dread and awe had seized the congregation.

"And therefore, because Christ came for sinners, for spiritually sick people and not for those who believe that they are righteous and healthy — such like you — therefore I have no message for you today . . ." Again Rev. O'Brien fell silent.

The congregation sat like frozen and shivered with sudden cold. Their hearts were beating rapidly and their throats were dry like hot sand.

"There is only one member of our congregation, who cries out for the Saviour, who knows that he cannot live — or die — without Him," the minister went on, "but he is not here. He is in the hospital of Skobi. And there I will bring him my Christmas sermon this afternoon. He's waiting for it with all his heart . . ."

Rev. O'Brien could speak no more. Tears were streaming down his face as he stumbled down the pulpit and left the church building a broken man. The silence was heavy and for a long time no one dared to break it.

— — — — —

Rev. O'Brien and his wife entered the hospital that same afternoon, deep in thoughts with their heads bowed down in sadness and frustration. How can I tell Doc Nikolich the Good News when my own heart cries out in despair?, the minister worried. What can I give him, while my own heart is so empty? How can I teach him to pray when my own prayers don't seem to get answered? Yet he had to go . . .

He opened the door of the sick room and then stood still in sudden surprise. Doc Nikolich had visitors . . . several . . . The visitors got up from their chairs when they saw him. Presently Rev. O'Brien's legs seemed to give away and he felt dazed and dizzy. The floor waved under his feet and his wife quickly steadied him with his arm. Then he could focus again and saw the Brooks and the Putticks and Janice Smith.

John Puttick went to Rev. O'Brien. "I . . . we . . . we are ashamed . . . we wanted to say hello to Doc . . . and we want to hear your Christmas sermon . . .", he said very humbly.

Rev. O'Brien could not speak. He tried to swallow the lump in his throat, but no words came over his lips. Instead he seized Puttick's hand and the way he pressed it said more than words could've expressed. Then he saw Doc Nikolich, popped up against some pillows, his eyes shining with joy.

"They came to see me, Father!" he said excitedly. He sounded like a young child who had just seen his greatest wish come through.

"They came to see you . . ." Rev. O'Brien repeated softly. There was noise at the door and more people came in, hesitatingly and shy, but they all first went to the sick man in his bed and then they shook hands with their minister.

"We are sorry, Reverend . . ."

"We should've come here way earlier . . ."

"Thank you, Reverend . . ."

The nurse came in, shaking her head in disapproval. "No, that's impossible," she said. "That many visitors! No more than three at a time. The rest better wait out of the room."

Rev. O'Brien took her apart. "Let them," he pleaded. "It won't hurt Doc Nikolich. It will only do him good . . . They are God's answer on my prayers."

For a moment the professional expression on the nurse's face changed into a warm, understanding look. "All right then . . . But be quiet . . . He's very sick."

The room was too small to accommodate all people, for they kept on coming. Not the whole congregation was there, but many were. Shriner and his wife were missing and so were a few other couples, for there will always be people who have ears that do not want to hear.

In the long corridor children were running and laughing, for the hospital rules didn't allow children to visit patients. Yet many parents had taken them. Again Rev. O'Brien talked to the nurse and then to the children.

"Come and see Doc Nikolich," he said. "The nurse will let you if you are very quiet. We are going to have the Christmas sermon here, a very short one; but we still want to hear your choir, the doctor above all."

And so they came in, one by one, suddenly timid and embarrassed. The grown-ups moved away from the bed, so that the children could form half a circle around it. They sang a few well-known Christmas carols. Their voices were soft and not always steady and pure, but for Doc Nikolich it was the choir of angels.

Then Rev. O'Brien read the Christmas story and held his sermon. He didn't have to search for words, for God gave him the words in his mouth. And for the first time since months, the sermon only spoke of God's deep love and great mercy . . .

Doc Nikolich listened with his eyes closed, but a serene smile played around his lips.

Ineke Parlevliet.

A
Blessed Christmas
and a
Happy New Year

to all is the wish of Management and Staff.

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The Word of Life

Before the world was created, the Word already existed; he was with God, and he was the same as God. From the very beginning, the Word was with God. Through him God made all things; not one thing in all creation was made without him. The Word had life in himself and this life brought light to men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has never put it out.

God sent his messenger, a man named John, who came to tell people about the light. He came to tell them, so that all should hear the message and believe. He himself was not the light; he came to tell about the light. This was the real light, the light that comes into the world and shines on all men.

The Word, then, was in the world. God made the world through him, yet the world did not know him. Some, however, did receive him and believed in him; so he gave them the right to become God's children. They did not become God's children by natural means, by being born as the children of a human father; God himself was their Father.

The Word became a human being and lived among us. We saw his glory, full of grace and truth. This was the glory which he received as the Father's only Son.

John 1:1-14 — Today's English Version

Kerstfeest en de Engelen

Rondom het Kerstgebeuren indertijd, speelden engelen een belangrijke rol. Wij ruimen dan ook op onze diverse kerstwijdingen graag een plaatsje voor hen in. We decoreren onze programma's met hun beeltenis, zingen van hen in onze kerstliederen en versieren de kerstboom met engelenhaar. Voor de rest van het jaar trekken wij ons van de engelen niet zoveel aan. Toen ik me dit alles bedacht, heb ik geprobeerd me het bestaan van een engel, vooral zo omstreeks het kerstfeest, eens even in te denken.

A

Misschien is het wel extra druk in de hemel in de maand December! De engelen zullen waarschijnlijk niet eens tijd vinden om heimwee te hebben naar die nacht, nu alweer eeuwen geleden, waarin zij het luchtruim met hun stralend licht en jubelend zingen vervulden . . .

Zullen zij zich, in plaats daarvan, niet ergeren aan de onbeholpen manier waarop wij elk jaar weer met het kerstfeest omspringen?

Het kan niet anders of ze moeten wel eens in angstige spanning zien naar Hem, Die op de troon zit, wanneer het Ho-ho-ho van Santa Claus, de marsmuziek van de Christmas parades en het dronken gebral van de vele feestjes ten hemel stijgen.

Ze zullen vast en zeker verslagen zijn als ze van de vele honderden die een onverwachte dood op de rijweg vinden, misschien maar zo weinig zielen klapwiekend naar hun eeuwige bestemming mogen begeleiden.

Ontsteld zien ze het aan als een klein zwart jongetje, ogen groot van blijde verwachting, bij de deur wordt teruggestuurd omdat het kerstfeest van de Buurtvereniging alleen voor blanke kinderen is, ziet U.

En het contrast tussen de moeder die boos wordt omdat ze er niet in slaagt de juiste garnering te vinden voor het nieuwe feestjurkje van haar dochter, en de moeder die het aan moet zien dat haar baby van honger sterft, doet hen bedroeft hun hoofden schudden. De extra drukte zal hun dan ook, ter afleiding, zeer welkom zijn. Als een pijl uit de boog vliegen er een paar naar Vietnam, waar ze de sluipschutter laten struikelen, zodat zijn kogel met een doffe knal de grond inschiet en de vader van Robbie en Peter uit Akron, Ohio met de schrik vrijkomt en zijn plaats in het vliegtuig met verlofgangers op 23 December niet onbezet hoeft te blijven.

Een ander is net op tijd op de plaats in Holland waar het onheil nu geen kans krijgt. Met een forse ruk helpt hij vader Jansen het stuur om te gooien zodat het koude, donkere kanaalwater, dat al zo gulzig wachtte, hem en zijn vrouw en kinderen niet opslokt. Zodoende wachten opa en oma, twintig kilometer verderop, ook niet tevergeefs met het kerstdiner.

Ze vliegen af en aan, die engelen. Ze vangen brokstukken op van kerkdiensten, van klokgebeier, van zangkoren, van zacht gekreun in een ziekenhuis, van de klacht van een eenzame, van het gesprek tussen een bezielde gelovige en een cynische, ontgoochelde jonge vrouw in een gevangenis. Ze geven de dominees, wien de wetenschap dat er in deze weken extra mooie preken van hen verwacht worden, zwaar drukt, een bemoedigend klopje op de schouder, ze deinen even speels mee op het luiden van de klokken, ze fronsen wat bij de slechte imitatie van hun "Ere zij God," die sommige zangkoren ten beste geven, ze wekken een vermoeide nachtzuster op om toch nog maar eens even bij die oude man te gaan kijken die zo'n pijn heeft en laten een car vol jonge, jolige meisjes stoppen bij het huisje van die eenzame weduwe zonder kinderen, om haar met hun ernstig zingen het verdriet van het alleen-zijn, voor een poosje althans, te doen vergeten. Als de meisjes weg zijn, staat de kleine, rode poinsettia die ze achterlieten, dapper zijn best te doen om hun taak over te nemen. En de engelen staan alweer als een muur om die bezielde gelovige. In het voorbijgaan brengen ze ook een glimlach op het verkleumde gezicht van een heilsoldate, doordat ze een rijke jongeling bewegen een royale gift in haar kersthanger te doen.

A

Zouden ze tijd hebben om tussen de bedrijven door de vier hoeken der aarde af te turen om te zien of de Boodschap des Heils er al doorgedrongen is? Ze zullen daar toch vast wel eens een oogje aan wagen. Bij alles wat ze zien en horen op hun tochten naar de aarde, moet het verlangen naar het openbreken van de hemel om de Here Jezus ten tweede male door te laten, wel heel sterk in hen leven. Wat zou het een verrassing voor hun zijn als ze in December van het jaar onzes Heren 1969, ontdekten dat het gelovig gebed om die terugkeer van de Here Jezus, alle aardse geluiden overstemde!

Linda

Beelden van en uit Nederland

De Top

Heeft de Haagse Topconferentie resultaat gehad?

Ja, zegt de Nederlandse staatssecretaris van Buitenlandse Zaken, de heer H. J. de Koster.

Zijn mening was: "Europe heeft een grote stap voorwaarts gezet en in deze twee dagen (1 en 2 dec.) is meer bereikt dan in de afgelopen vijf jaar. .... Europa staat nu weer volop in de uitbouw tot de eenheid. En dat is het gelukkige resultaat, dat uiteindelijk na enige uren van onderhandelingen bereikt werd."

Laten we hopen dat hij gelijk krijgt.

Het heeft er wel gespannen. Bondskanselier Brandt van West-Duitsland liet duidelijk blijken, dat een crisis dreigde, maar dat die overwonnen werd, blijkbaar in een gesprek tussen hem en de Franse president Pompidou.

Het vrijgeven van de resolutie nam veel tijd, zodat Koningin Juliana en Prins Bernhard enige malen gebeld moesten worden, dat het afscheidsdiner in de Lakenhal te Leiden een halfuur moest worden uitgesteld.

De bijna 6 pagina's tellende resolutie gaat er vanuit, dat men in het definitieve stadium van de Europese Gemeenschap is gekomen en als consequentie daarvan de definitieve financiële regelingen voor de landbouw vast moet stellen voor het eind van dit jaar (Franse eis!). Met Engeland, Ierland, Denemarken en Noorwegen zou dan voor 1 juli van het volgende jaar onderhandelingen kunnen aanvangen over toetreding als lid tot de E.E.G. Die datum is niet in de resolutie opgenomen, maar als een mondelinge afspraak verbindend verklaard.

Minder opwekkend was een Frans radio-bericht van de ochtend na de sluiting, dat Engeland dan binnen drie jaar lid in volle rechten zou kunnen zijn.

Niettemin is zeker, dat de huidige Franse president niet het starre standpunt van generaal De Gaulle inneemt.

Een aantal belangrijke voorstellen, door hem ingediend, wijzen er op, dat hij toch ook wil streven naar een Europese integratie. Die voorstellen omvatten: een economische en monetaire unie, vorming van een Europees reservefonds, bevordering van technologische activiteiten binnen de gemeenschap, wetenschappelijk onderzoek in de industriële sectoren en een nieuwe taak voor Euratom.

Dit alles zal veel overleg en onderhandelingen (harde onderhandelingen, zei staatssecretaris De Koster) vragen, maar er is een vertrouwen gewekt, dat, indien de wil tot verdere versterking tot eenheid blijft, blijvende resultaten zal kunnen bieden. De toekomst zal het leren!

Cn.

Is Uw echtgenoot getrouwd?

— met zijn merk pijptabak, bedoelen we! Indien niet — hier komt U in het spel. Geef hem een zakje pijptabak met de meest aangename aroma! Dat is Amphora "Full Aromatic" in het rode zakje. Geef hem een zakje van deze extra milde, zachte tabak — voor onze rekening. Geen verplichting — post slechts onderstaande bon (sluit a.u.b. een leeg zakje in van de pijptabak die hij nu rookt) en wij zenden U een origineel zakje Amphora "Full Aromatic" voor Uw echtgenoot om te proberen. We zijn zeker dat U beiden de plezierige aroma zult waarderen.

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(Dit aanbod is geldig tot 31 dec. 1969 en is beperkt tot één gratis zakje per persoon, per adres.) Key No. CC6/1

KLM tarieven zijn nu lager dan ooit tevoren: $278. naar Amsterdam.

De nieuwe lage 22-daagse excursie tarieven, economy klasse, die de KLM aanbiedt, maken het een stuk aantrekkelijker om Uw familie en vrienden in Nederland te bezoeken en er langer dan 3 weken te blijven. Een ander voordeel is dat U elke dag van de week kunt vertrekken!

Om U zo'n bezoek zo prettig mogelijk te maken, heeft de KLM een aantal huur-auto arrangementen ontwikkeld, die bijzonder voordelig geprijsd zijn. Op deze wijze kunt U de beschikking hebben over een auto voor een gedeelte van Uw verblijf (desgewenst Uw hele verblijf), met alle gemakken daarvan. Het Comfi-Car programma omvat 4 arrangementen, waaruit U een keus kunt maken, en die geprijsd zijn vanaf $334.* Hierin is Uw reistarief begrepen en van 1 tot 3 weken huur van een volledig toegeruste auto (afhankelijk van de vraag of U alleen of met z'n tweeën reist). En van 750 tot een onbeperkt aantal kilometers gratis rijden!

Mocht U in Europa liever per trein reizen, dan biedt de KLM U voor dezelfde prijs 1500 kilometers treinvervoer (2e klasse)!

Indien Uw bezoek aan Nederland de drie weken niet te boven gaat, dan raden we U aan Uw voordeel te trekken uit het "Europe by Road or Rail" programma, dat U voor slechts $331** niet minder dan 3 weken de beschikking geeft over een auto, met 2100 km gratis rijden! En Uw eerste en laatste nacht in een hotel in Amsterdam. Of indien U niet auto rijdt, 2250 km treinvervoer, 2e klasse.

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* gebaseerd op 22-daags excursietarief vanuit Montreal, geldig tot 15 mei 1970, met een minimaal verblijf van 22 dagen in Europa.

** gebaseerd op IT groepstarieven vanuit Montreal, 2 personen in auto.

Is het niet hoog tijd dat U naar Nederland reisde?

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For the children

THE NEW HELPER

Well, how was school to-day?" asked Mrs. Carson, as she poured milk for her three children, and gave them their after-school-snack. "Did anything exciting happen?"

Eleven year old Doreen shook her head. "Not in our class. Same old thing, we had two tests and I'm sure I flunked geography. That's still my worst subject and it always will be."

"My worst subject is arithmetic," interrupted ten year old Carl. "What's the use of arithmetic anyway? When I'm grown-up I'll just buy myself an adding machine, and then I don't need arithmetic at all."

Mother smiled. "And how is my youngest son Robert?" she asked, as she stroked his hair. "Is the work getting harder in grade two?"

"You bet it is mom," Robert replied as he licked the last few cookie crumbs off his fingers. "You know mom, we're already learning songs for our Christmas program."

"Five weeks from now it will be Christmas, so I think your teacher is wise," answered his mother. "Well, children, you may play outside for an hour or so before supper, but remember, to-morrow will be Saturday, and then you'll have to do some chores for me. You'll have to rake leaves, and the garage has to be cleaned, daddy won't be home to-morrow, so he won't get around to it. You know, children, I just love our big house and our big yard with all its trees, but we almost need a gardener to keep everything tidy, don't we? If daddy did not have to travel so much and be away from home so much, things would be a lot easier. But I'm glad that my children are getting bigger, and can help me."

"Sure mom, raking leaves is fun," Robert said good-naturedly, "if Doreen and Carl do the raking, then I'll burn the leaves."

"Oh no, you won't," interrupted Carl, while he punched his brother in the stomach. "Babies aren't allowed to play with matches."

"Who's a baby, you are!" shouted Robert, and he punched his older brother right back, but mother separated her two warriors, and five minutes later the three children were happily playing outside.

"Let's go to the haunted house," Doreen suggested. "We can easily get there, and be back before it's dark."

"Okay, let's," agreed her brothers, and quickly they marched into the direction of the "haunted" house.

The house had been vacant for more than two years now; it was located on a lonely stretch of highway, about fifteen minutes from the Carson's home, and it was probably more than a hundred years old. Many windows were broken, and doors missed hinges, and rumors were heard that the house would soon be torn down, but in the meantime it proved to be an ideal playground for children. Nowhere else was playing hide and seek more fun than here, and if you used your imagination you could pretend that the house was haunted or that some Indians were butchering a buffalo in the shack behind the house.

"We should take a few friends along," said Carl, "it's more fun to go with a whole gang."

"Are you afraid?" Doreen teased, but then she had to run, for Carl wasn't going to take that insult, and started chasing her. Laughing and panting the three children reached the driveway, which led to the deserted house.

"I'll be there first," Doreen called, and sure enough, she was the first one to open the frontdoor and have a peek inside, while her two brothers followed close behind.

But then something strange happened . . .

Ten seconds later Doreen slammed the frontdoor shut again, and whispered with a trembling voice, "Carl, Robert, don't go inside, someone is in there!"

"Go on," Carl said unbelievingly. "You're just trying to fool us, let me have a look!"

"No, no, I saw it, it's really true, somebody was sitting in that old chair near the fireplace," Doreen went on, still shaking. "Come on, let's go home, maybe it's a robber, or . . ."

And then, slowly . . . the frontdoor opened again, and the three frightened children saw an elderly man standing in the doorway, who was dressed in shabby clothes, but who had a kind face and who spoke to them in a friendly voice. "Did I scare you?" the children heard him say. "I'm sorry, don't be afraid of me, I'll explain why I was here. Won't you come in?"

"We are not allowed to talk to complete strangers," Doreen began bravely. "Mom and dad warned us that it could be very dangerous sometimes. You see, sometimes you can't trust strangers, they might want to harm children." Then she paused for a moment. "But I think we can trust you," she continued. "You're nice, I can tell by the way you act. Come on boys, let's go inside." The man smiled, and all of a sudden Carl and Robert weren't afraid anymore, and they followed their older sister.

"Let's sit on the floor," Robert suggested, and the man went back to the only chair that was left in the livingroom.

"I'm Mr. Rankin," he began, "and I was on my way to the city, fifty miles from here. But I'm out of a job, that's why I want to go to the city, it's easier to find work there. I don't have very much money, so I decided to hitchhike. I was pretty lucky this afternoon, I travelled over a hundred miles, but this truckdriver had to go to another town, so I got off about three miles from here. I wasn't so lucky after that, so I started to walk along the highway. Well, then I saw this old, deserted house, and suddenly I realized I was pretty tired, so I decided to have a look inside and see if I could spend the night here. It won't be long until it's dark, and it's much easier to get a ride during the day. I've only been here for fifteen minutes, and, though I did feel a bit lonely, I already have company. But don't you children have to go home, before it's dark, do you live far from here?"

"No, if we walk fast, and run a little now and then, it only takes ten minutes," answered Carl, "and mom knows that we often go here, lots of kids play here, especially during the summer."

Robert looked at Mr. Rankin for a minute, and then he said unbelievingly, "Do you mean that you are going to sleep here in this old place all night, aren't you afraid?"

"There isn't even a bed here," Doreen added, "and it's November, it's pretty cold here, and you don't even wear an overcoat."

"And don't you have to eat?" asked Carl. "The nearest store is at least two miles away."

"I'm not very hungry," replied Mr. Rankin, "and as a boy I camped outside many times."

Doreen was quiet for a minute, and then she said, "Mr. Rankin, you have to come with us. We live in a big old house, and we have two guestrooms, and I'm sure that mom will be angry if we tell her that we left you in this cold, dark place."

"Oh no, I can't do that," protested Mr. Rankin, "I don't even know your mother, and what would your father say?"

"Dad won't be home until about eight o'clock to-night. He travels a lot, but I'm sure he feels the same way mom does. Come on, Mr. Rankin, you go with my two brothers, and I'll start running home so I can tell my mother that we are bringing a guest home," Doreen said. "Come on boys, don't walk too fast. Mr. Rankin is tired, I'll start running now."

Ten minutes later a surprised Mrs. Carson listened to the story of her excited daughter. But then mother patted her daughter on the back and said approvingly, "Well done, Doreen, I'm glad that you felt sorry for the man, and that you wanted to help, let's put an extra plate on the table, supper is ready anyway."

When mother saw her two sons enter the driveway she went to the hall and opened the frontdoor. "Come in, Mr. Rankin," she said warmly. "I found out a lot about you in five minutes. We were just going to eat, so you're just in time."

Mr. Rankin seemed to be bit shy and embarrassed, and when mother said grace before they started to eat, Doreen noticed that he did not fold his hands at first; but soon mother and the children made him feel at home.

"You said you weren't hungry, Mr. Rankin," Robert exclaimed all of a sudden, "but you sure eat a lot!"

"Robert!!" mother said disapprovingly; and then she turned to Mr. Rankin. "I'm glad you like my cooking. After supper the children can show you the guestroom and then they have to do the dishes and go to bed. Perhaps we can talk for a while. My husband should be home soon."

"How come you trust me, Mrs. Carson?" asked Mr. Rankin suddenly. "You don't even know me. I'm just a tramp your children picked up in a deserted house. My clothes are old, I'm old myself, most people wouldn't even bother looking at me!"

Mother smiled. "Maybe I'll tell you later," she answered. "Why don't you sit in the livingroom for a while and read the paper?"

A few hours later the children were sound asleep in their bedrooms, and dad had come home and met Mr. Rankin, while mother had made the bed in the guestroom.

"You people are very kind to me," Mr. Rankin began. "You have trusted me and taken me into your home; me, a complete stranger. I'd like to be honest with you. Would you also have taken me into your home if you knew that I had been in prison for two years and that I just got out?"

Mom and dad looked at each other, and then dad said quietly, "Do you want to tell us all about it?"

"I'm a janitor," Mr. Rankin began. "My wife and I looked after an apartment building. We cleaned it, collected the rent for the owner, repaired the furnace or leaky faucets and so on. My wife died four years ago, we only had one daughter, she is almost forty now, she never married. We were so proud of our Joan, we sent her to college, for she was a very good student, and now she is a highschool teacher. Maybe we spoiled our only child because she's always a bit proud and didn't like it that her father was a janitor, and not a doctor or a lawyer. She did not come to see us very often after she left home. Well, to make a long story short, I was very lonely after my wife died. Some friends came over to see me often, but they were not right friends for me. I had always been honest, although I don't go to church, but soon I agreed with my friends that it was much easier to be a little dishonest. I took some money that belonged to the tenants, and I spent it with my friends. Soon I took some more money, once I started, I didn't want to stop. But finally I got caught and I had to go to prison for two years. My daughter came to see me once, but I was very rude to her, and I told her never to come and see me again. I was so ashamed of myself that I couldn't face her. She wrote me several times, but I didn't answer her letters. She has to forget that she has a father who stole and who had to go to jail. It's better that she has nothing to do with me anymore. I don't want to go back to my hometown, where everybody knows me, so I decided to go to a city where nobody knows me, and nobody knows that I have been in prison. Perhaps I can get a job cleaning offices, and rent a room and make my own meals. I have always been a hard worker, so it should not be too difficult to find a job." Mr. Rankin stopped, and mother and dad were silent for a moment.

(Continued on page 13)

(Continued from page 12)

"I'm going to give you another cup of coffee," mother said finally, "and then I'll show you your room. You look as if you could use a good night's sleep."

After their guest had gone upstairs, and mother and dad were alone, mother asked all of a sudden, "Dad, do you know what I'm thinking?"

Dad looked at mother and he started laughing. "I think I do," he replied. "You're thinking: We have a big old house where something always needs fixing. And you're thinking: We have a big yard, and my husband never has time to help outside, and you're also thinking: That poor old man is going to be very lonely in a big city."

"Yes," mom continued, "and I'm also thinking: We have a great big garage, almost as big as a small house, with an empty room in the attic, which could easily be made into a bed-sitting room. With an electric heater it wouldn't be cold in the winter. And I'm also thinking: if Mr. Rankin is willing to stay here, he could help with cleaning this big, old house and I could let the cleaning woman, who comes two days a week to help me, go. She said she was getting too busy anyway. We could give Mr. Rankin a place to live where he would be on his own, yet only a few yards away from our house, and we could pay him the amount we pay the cleaning lady. I'm sure there are lots of things to do for him, the house needs painting and when you are home, you would have more time to spend with the children. What do you think dad?"

"I think," replied dad, "that we should do what the Bible teaches us; I think of what Jesus said, 'I was hungry, and you fed me, naked and you clothed me, in prison and you visited me.' God brought this lonely man into our lives, I'm sure of it. We'll ask him to-morrow, and if he agrees, we'll tell the children."

T

The next morning, after breakfast, dad talked to his guest alone for a while. When he entered the kitchen he announced happily, "Well mom, children, may I present our new gardener, janitor and handyman?" And when the children started to ask all kinds of surprised questions, he only laughed and said, "Ask your mother and Mr. Rankin, I have to leave now, and I won't be home until suppertime, but I'm sure that with Mr. Rankin's help our yard will be the tidiest one in the neighbourhood to-night!"

"Are you staying here?" asked the children.

Mr. Rankin answered with a trembling voice, "Your parents have offered me a job here and a place to live. I still can't believe it."

"We're going to be busy," mother interrupted, "for we have to fix up Mr. Rankin's room in the garage. There's a bed in the basement, and an old rug and there must be a table and some chairs, let's get busy everybody!"

The children couldn't remember ever having had so much fun while working.

Mr. Rankin proved to be a person who loved children. He knew lots of stories, he was a good carpenter (he fixed the leg of an old chair in no time). He showed Carl how to varnish a table, and Robert how to make a feeding place for the birds in the trees around the garage, with some string and a few boards. Doreen washed windows and floors and mother came with sheets and blankets, and at eleven o'clock Mr. Rankin's new home was a clean, cosy room, with a bed, table, chairs, some lamps, some books, a clock, a heater and even a coffee kettle and a hotplate, so Mr. Rankin could make his own meals.

"All we need is a fridge," said mother, "but I'm sure dad can pick up a second-hand one somewhere next week."

"I can't thank you enough," Mr. Rankin started. But mother laughed, "I'm sure that I can't thank you enough when I see that somebody is here to help me with this big house and the garden. We often said that we needed somebody fulltime, the house didn't get the care it should have, but somehow we never found the right person. And I think we did now!"

T

The weeks passed quickly. The children loved to have Mr. Rankin around, it seemed as if a grandfather had come to live with them, a grandfather who could paint bedrooms, fix broken toys, tell stories, clean basements, and who knew all about birds and animals. After school the children often went to their new friend's room and he showed them how to dry leaves, decorate pinecones for Christmas, and how to make candles. Mr. Rankin also went to church with them. He wore one of dad's old suits, which was too small for dad anyway, and the children showed him where to find the hymns and the Bible portions.

"I don't know much about the Bible," Mr. Rankin confessed, "but you children can help me, and explain things I don't understand."

Mother asked Mr. Rankin one day in which town his daughter lived, and Mr. Rankin told her, but he added: "It's much better that she forgets about her dad, maybe, after I have proven to you and to myself that I never want to be dishonest again, maybe then I'll write her sometime."

Mother had said nothing, and everybody was getting busy for Christmas. A giant tree had been put up in the livingroom by Mr. Rankin, and the house smelled delicious. The children were busy buying and making Christmas presents, and at night mother gathered her family around the piano, and dad and even Mr. Rankin joined them in the singing of the familiar Christmas carols.

"We do this every year," dad explained to Mr. Rankin. "starting a week before Christmas. We want to remind the children that the most important part of Christmas is the birth of God's Son."

T

Finally it was Christmas morning. "You'd better run to the garage and get Mr. Rankin, Carl," said dad, "he's probably too modest to come, but tell him we won't start unwrapping the presents until he's here."

The next half hour passed quickly. Everybody was opening presents, and Mr. Rankin was not forgotten. Finally mother said: "Now I have one more surprise for Mr. Rankin, I'll get it, will you come with me, Mr. Rankin?"

"What is it, what is it? Can't we see it?" begged the children, when mother returned alone.

But mom said: "I'm sure Mr. Rankin wants to be alone with his surprise for a while, but I'll tell you what it is." Here mother began to whisper. "I did something very daring, I wrote a letter to Mr. Rankin's daughter, and I told her all about her dad, and how we love him here, and how lonely and how proud he was. I didn't even know her address, I only knew the town in which she lived, so I put on the envelope: Miss Rankin, highschool teacher, and then the name of the town. And she got it all right! I invited her over for New Year's Day, to come and spend the day with us, and of course with her father as well. She wrote a very friendly letter back, and explained that she had felt very guilty herself, for she had neglected her father after her mother's death. She felt sorry for her dad, and she wants to show him that she still loves him very much, and she's coming over on New Year's Day. Mr. Rankin's surprise was a letter from his daughter. I saved it for him, and I gave it to him just now! I bet I know what's in that letter, and I bet we all know!"

When Mr. Rankin entered the room a while later, he sniffed a little, as if he had a cold, and his eyes were a little red. "I never cared much for God in my life," he said softly, "but during the last few weeks I found out that God cares very much for me!"

(Mrs.) B. Hosmar

TO FEED THE ANGELS

"And if you are going to invite those people, I am not going to stay here!" With these words, sixteen-year-old Steven stalked angrily out of the room, slamming the door behind him.

An uneasy silence fell in the room, where the family, till just a few moments ago, had been happily discussing plans for the holidays. Everyone had made suggestions, and there had been fun and laughter until I mentioned the name of an elderly couple and suggested that they be our guests on Christmas Day. These people are at times grouchy and not too easy to get along with, but also, I feel, very lonesome. And is Christmas not a feast to give and to share? That's why I thought it would be nice to invite them, to share with them some of our joy, our happiness. But when I had mentioned this, Steven had been set against it. The others had not said much, but he was so outspoken about it, so very different from his usual easygoing manner. It surprised me unpleasantly. I tried to make him see, that it was our Christian duty, that Jesus Himself taught us to do so. But he did not think that we had to do that on Christmas Day and anyway, not that couple.

Then I made a big mistake. Much as I hate to throw around Bible texts, I now mentioned the one from Hebrews 13, where Paul says that we, thus doing, sometimes entertain angels unawares. It was then that he blew his top and left the room.

For a little while, we were all quiet, but then thirteen-year-old Mary said: "Oh, well, let him go," and soon everyone was talking and making plans again. But for me, the fun was gone, although I tried not to show it. Late in the evening my husband and I talked it over and we decided to let things go for a while.

But the days wore on and I could not find a solution. Our son was often away after school, was quiet and withdrawn. I did not try to talk to him, he even seemed to avoid me, or was I imagining things? It was not easy, for what were we supposed to do? Jesus speaks so clearly about it and when comes a better time to show that we love Him than on His birthday? On the other hand, were we to lose our son or at least part of the happiness in our home? Are we supposed to lose our children in order to invite strangers in, let it be angels? I did not know what to do. If our children would rather have a family-day than a day to share with strangers, must we not think this the better then, so that we can keep our family together? But no, we may not let them grow up just doing and going after the things they like best, without any consideration for others. If they do not learn that now, they never will in later life. And we are the ones who must teach them, must set an example. We have always had our house open for everybody and never heard any complaints. Our children can bring in their friends and often we have a 'full house'. Why then was Steven this way? He was always so easygoing, maybe somewhat quiet, but we never sensed any resentment in him. And now he turned his back on us.

Maybe I took it too hard, but I really struggled with this problem.

I am not a learned person and I can not debate the Bible as so many of our friends can. But I believe the Bible with my whole heart and Jesus' teachings are clear in my heart and mind. As for myself, I knew what to do but what about my son? He seemed to be away from home more than ever.

It was a couple of days before Christmas and still there was no solution to our problem. I did my baking and cleaned the house, as was our custom, but it did not give me any satisfaction. I kept on turning everything over the situation in my mind and felt that we had to make a decision today. This determination made me feel a little better and, with a prayer in my heart I set to work once more.

A noise at the back boor made me drop my work, but before I had reached the kitchendoor, it opened from the other side. In came Steven and something in his facial expression made me wonder . . . He carried something heavy, and put it on the kitchen table. A smile crossed his face as he said, "Here, Mom, to feed your angels." A quick hug and he had gone up to his room.

With trembling fingers, I opened the brown-papered package. Out came a big turkey and his words sounded in my ears again: "to feed your angels!" A deep joy filled my heart. Did you ever say a prayer with a frozen turkey in your hands? I did.

"To feed your angels," he had said. So, he too was seeing what we ought to do! The solution to our problem lay here, on the kitchen table, in the form of a turkey.

I had to control myself painfully not to run into his room, to talk with him, to ask him about this! Oh no, not that mistake again! Later he would tell me, where he got that turkey from, I know he did not have the money to buy it. For now it was enough to know, that we could celebrate Christ's birthday in the way He asks it of us, and our son would be with us. What a joy, what a wonderful Christmas joy!

Later he told us, that he did not feel right about his behaviour. He wanted to show his love, yet he could not appreciate this couple. He thought they would spoil our family fun and, therefore, Christmas as a whole. But gradually he saw, how wrong he was. He wanted to make up with us, but he did not know how.

Then a friend asked him to help out on his fathers turkey-farm. He jumped at the chance and so he earned his turkey.

Our invitation came as a surprise to the couple and we were surprised to see how happy they were to be with us all day. To share our joy gave us a most wonderful Christmas Day.

G.W.V.

BOB WHEATLEY (at the Lexington Crusade): How many of us go through life as peasants when we could be walking as royalty in Christ.

Gezegend Kerstfeest

en een

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To all our clients, greetings for Christmas and a happy New Year

THE CHRISTMAS PRESENT

Mr. James A. Michener is the author of many books, including "Tales of the South Pacific", "Hawaii" and most recently "The Source." He relates this true story of his boyhood.

When he was about nine years old he used to mow the lawn of a neighbour, Mrs. Long, an elderly lady who lived across the street from the Presbyterian Church. She didn't pay him very much for the chore but she did promise him that as Christmas time came she would have a present for him. She promised it with such enthusiasm that James began to spend much time wondering what the gift might be.

He didn't own a baseball glove, a bicycle or ice skates as many of his friends did, so he began to dream that the gift might be one of these. As time went on he reasoned with himself about the improbability of the first two. Mrs. Long, the elderly neighbour, knew so little about baseball, he could hardly imagine her buying one for him. She was a tiny lady so a bicycle seemed out of the question also.

On his last Saturday to work for Mrs. Long, James was told again to come at Christmas time and collect his gift. "You've been a good boy all summer," she added, "don't forget to come."

How could he forget! All through November the weather became colder and one morning the ice appeared. Not really using caution James walked out on the slippery surface, meanwhile dreaming of the ice skates he might receive from Mrs. Long. He was rudely awakened by a man who yelled at him that the ice was not nearly strong enough to hold him.

As Christmas approached James became more and more anxious. On the 1st of December he was ready to go and collect his gift, but his family agreed it was too early. "She may not have it wrapped yet," someone argued and that made sense.

But the 15th was also too early and the 20th too. On the 21st of December a severe cold snap froze all ponds, so all the boys brought out their skates.

James was ready too, if Mrs. Long was going to give him a present, and if it was skates, she may as well let him enjoy them now when the ice was good. He would not open the gift till Christmas but just knowing that he had them would be enough. On the 22nd he walked down to Mrs. Long's house, unable to restrain himself any longer.

He marched to the door and stated: "I've come for my present, Mrs. Long."

"I've been waiting for you," she said and led him into the parlor. In a moment she stood before the boy holding a package which under no conceivable circumstances could hold a bicycle, baseball glove or ice skates. James was terribly disappointed but tried not to show it, remembering his family's advice: "Whatever it is, accept it gracefully and say Thank you."

The parcel was about 9 inches wide, a foot long and no more than ¼ inch thick. He became very curious what it could contain and as he took the parcel from her, he could not help asking "What is it?"

"You will see on Christmas Day," she answered. James shook it, nothing rattled, only an unidentifiable noise could be heard.

Mrs. Long only smiled and said: "Its a kind of magic."

That was enough to set off the boys' imagination. Magic! He could visualize himself turning pitchers of milk into rabbits. It seemed Christmas would never come. He saw other gifts, but none held the fascination that Mrs. Long's gift brought.

As the family was accustomed to gift opening Christmas morning, James' fingers shook as he tore the papers off the gift he had so long been wondering about.

When he finally opened the lid, all he saw was a pile of ten shimmering flimsy sheets of black paper, labelled with iridescent letters: Carbon Paper, Regal Premium. Vaguely James wondered what type of magic these sheets could possibly contain.

His Aunt Laura, a school teacher, saw his perplexed look and quickly assured him: "It really is magic." She took 2 pieces of white paper, slipped one of the black sheets from the box in between and wrote his name on the upper sheet. Then removing it and the sheet of Carbon Paper Regal Premium, she handed him the second sheet, which her pencil had in no way touched. There was his name! Clean and very dark, as beautiful as Christmas Day. James was delighted. Magic . . . indeed it was!

That moment was of such importance, the door opened to a boy into the wonders of duplicating, printing, disseminating ideas, which later he would use to form his life's career.

How he wrote and wrote, until not a shred of blackness was left on the carbon sheets. How much more it meant to him than a baseball glove or ice skates would have meant to a boy like James Michener.

Not till years later James realized the sheets of carbon paper had cost very little, that she had used them for her purposes and would have thrown them away except that she had the ingenuity to guess that a boy would profit from an unusual gift. She had spent no money but she had given a boy something infinitely more valuable: imagination.

As James Michener relates this true story, he ends it by saying:

I hope this year some boys and girls will receive from thoughtful adults who really love them, gifts which will jolt them out of all they have known up to now. It is such gifts — and such experiences — usually costing nothing or very little, that transform a life and lend it an impetus that may continue for decades.

E.S.

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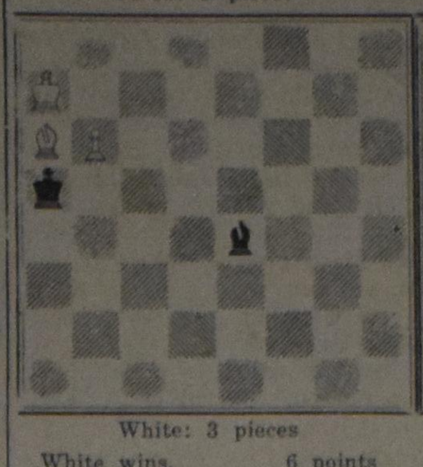
Let's Play Chess

Editor Mr. C. HESS

FOR YOUR ENTERTAINMENT

XXI

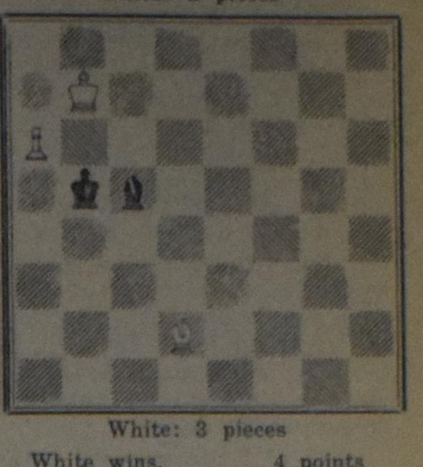
Author: A. Finch,
Britain 1929
Black: 2 pieces



White: 3 pieces
White wins. 6 points

XXII

Author: A. Finch,
Britain 1929
Black: 2 pieces



White: 3 pieces
White wins. 4 points

NOTES

1. The two endings presented are very interesting because both of them could have been taken from a regular game. I found them in Canadian Chess Chat, issue of April 1969.
2. In both cases you should act just as if you would play white. The variations in XXI are more complicated than those in XXII. This explains the difference in reward.
3. You have a good opportunity now to entertain yourself in the Christmas holidays. I wish you good success.
4. Newcomers can make points extra by solving these studies. If at the same time you send in your solutions of the regular problems you may make an excellent start.
5. The deadline is the same as published last week.

SOLUTIONS OF THE OCTOBER PROBLEMS

Nr. 368 (Kramer)

This excellent problem has a one-way solution: 1. K-N1, P-N6; 2. B-R1, P-N7; 3. P-R8/Q, PxB/Q ch; 4. QxQ mate. A perfect miniature shows a perfect solution.

Nr. 369 (Loyd)

Hundred years ago when Loyd presented this problem for the first time people complained that his product was unsolvable. The trick that they overlooked was that white can take en passant (e.p.) when black plays 1. —, P-B4. The official solution is: 1. Q-KN4 ch, waiter.

Nr. 370 (Von Holxhausen)

After a bit of study one discovers that White should try to get rid of its Rook. 1. R-B4 is the only possibility:

a. 1. —, BxR; 2. P-B8/Q ch, B-N1; 3. Q-B3 mate (no Rook stands in the way any longer).
b. 1. —, B-R5; 2. P-B8/Q ch, B-Q1; 3. QxB mate.
c. 1. —, K-N1; 2. P-B8/Q ch, K-B2; 3. R-B7 mate. Isn't this a cute problem?

Nr. 371 (Layer)

1. Q-R2, thr. 2. N-B4 mate. In general Layer's problems are not too easy. This one is very good because of the big number of variations.

XVII. 1. B-N8, K-N8; 2. B-R7 ch, K-R8; 3. N-N6, K-N8; 4. N-B4 ch, K-R8; 5. N-K3, K-N8; 6. N-B5 ch, K-R8; 7. N-N3 mate. This is a long story with a happy ending.

XVIII. 1. QxP ch, KxQ; 2. P-R8/Q, RxQ; 3. R-N5 ch, K-B1; 4. RxR ch, N-N1; 5. RxN mate.

DUTCH

Nr. 368	1. Kb1, b3; 2. La1, b2; 3. h8/D, ba1/D sch.; 4. Da1: mat.
Nr. 369	1. Dg4 sch. tempo.
Nr. 370	1. Tb4; 2. f8/D sch. en 3. Tf7 mat.
Nr. 371	1. Dh2, dr. 2. Pc4 mat.
XVII.	1. Lb8, Kg1; 2. La7, Kh1; 3. Pb6, 4. Pc4, 5. Pe3, 6. Pf5, 7. Pg3 mat.
XVIII.	1. Dg7:, Kg7:; 2. h8/D, Th8:; 3. Tg5, Kf8; 4. Th8:, Pg8:; 5. T(h)g8: mat.

PLEASE NOTE: There is no ladder this time because the copy for this Christmas issue had to be with the printer on Dec. 4. Two ladders will be published on January 28.

ANTARCTICA RESEARCHERS—All from Ohio State University in Columbus, the first American women scientific team to work in Antarctica arrive at McMurdo Station. They are (from left) Mrs. Kay Lindsay; Dr. Lois Jones, leader; Mrs. Eileen McSaveney, and Miss Terry Tickhill. They will conduct field research in the rocky, ice-free valleys 70 miles west of the station for three months.

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Calvinist-Contact
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With joy in our hearts, we announce our gift from God (December 2, 1969)

JOLENE MARGO

A sister for Raymond John.

John and Winnie Van der Borgh.

1628 Giddings Ave. S.E., Grand Rapids, Mich. 49507.

With great gratitude to the Lord we announce the safe arrival of our twins

THOMAS MICHAEL
and
RENA LEIGH

Charles and Lilly Snyder, nee Hogeterp.

R.R. 3, Caledonia, Ont., Canada.

December 7, 1969.

With great thankfulness to God we like to announce the birth of our daughter

SYLVIA HELENE DEBRA

A sister for Richard and Christopher.

Simon and Christine Schotsman.

December 10, 1969.

7 McIntosh Ave., Hamilton, Ont.

Mr. and Mrs. B. K. De Haan announce the marriage of their daughter

BOUKJE TRYNTJE
(Bess)
to
Mr. CHRIS VANDERWAL

son of Mr. and Mrs. G. VanderWal, Niagara Falls, Ont. on Saturday, December 13, 1969, D.V., at 4 o'clock in the Rehoboth Chr. Ref. Church, Niagara Falls.

Rev. Polman officiating.

Stevensville, Ont., 2318 Victoria St.

Future address: 29 Manning St., St. Catharines, Ont.

Dr. and Mrs. L. Praamsma of Fruitland, Ont. are very happy to announce the forthcoming marriage of their youngest daughter

CHRISTINE IRENE
with
Mr. ANCO FARENHORST

son of Mr. and Mrs. D. Farenhorst of Hamilton, Ont., on Saturday, December 27, 1969, at 3.30 p.m. in the Fruitland Christian Reformed Church of Fruitland.

Future address:
108 George St., Hamilton, Ont.

We express our heartiest gratitude to all our relatives and friends, for making our 40th wedding anniversary such a pleasant and delightful event. Thank you very much for the many gifts, cards and letters we received.

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CONTACT

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Op 12 november 1969 nam God tot Zich in Zijn heerlijkheid onze geliefde echtgenoot, vader, grootvader en overgrootvader

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geliefde echtgenoot van Trijntje Kleine, Ladner, B.C.

Zijn kinderen:
Trijn & Jaap Westra, Holland.
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Hennie & William van Tol, Ladner, B.C.
Tienie & John Kornelius, Chilliwack, B.C.

Stiefzoons:
Alex & Annie Pastoor, Mission, B.C.
John & June Pastoor, Ladner, B.C.
Albert Pastoor, Ladner, B.C.

27 kleinkinderen & 1 achterkleinkind.

On December 9, 1969 it pleased God to take to Himself, our dear little girl

VONDA LYNNE,

at the young age of seven months.

Mr. & Mrs.
Tony Boonstra.
Anthony William.

"Suffer little children to come unto Me."

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Het verlicht het jeuken en ongemak in minuten en versnelt het genezen van het beschadigde en ontstoken weefsel.

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(Adv.)

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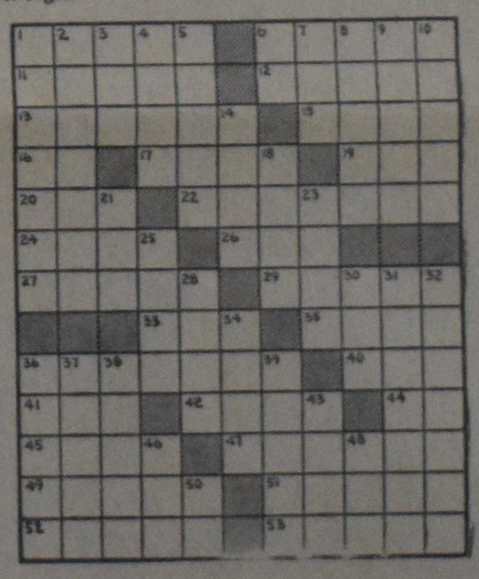
6. Agreements
11. Silly
12. —— Churchill
13. Metrical form
15. Via Veneto city
16. Element (sym.)
17. Petition
19. Tailless animal
20. Where (L.)
22. Resident of Nome
24. Ireland
26. Owing
27. Guide
29. Harness strap
33. —— test
35. Source of linen
36. Four-legged pet
40. Insect science (abbr.)
41. Midianite leader
42. Balancing star
44. Perform
45. Solitary
47. Stock market figure
49. Legal claims
51. Occurrence
52. Stranger
53. Hires

DOWN
1. Admirable qualities
2. Populate
3. English physician
4. Emmets
5. Hawaiian tree
6. Letter item (abbr.)
7. Rhine tributary
8. Frog sound
9. Clearwater neighbor
10. Gloss
14. Weather word
18. Tight
21. Anger
23. Peasant
25. Wrigglers
28. Informs (sl.)
30. Malt beverage
31. White-hot
32. Bleeds
34. Sugar ——
36. Telephone word
37. Shun
38. Excavated, as ore
39. More infrequent
43. Wash
46. Compass point (abbr.)
48. Lair
50. Class year (abbr.)



Saturday's Answer

SOLUTION to previous Crossword Puzzle

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Want daarna wordt U niet zozeer verwacht.

Maar toch, U denkt heel anders dan wij denken,
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U wilt maar niet één dag, maar alle dagen,
U wilt dat onze Kerst-vreugd' nimmer stopt.

Laat daarom Kerstfeest echt vernieuwing wezen,
Verlicht ons leven met Uw liefdesgloed.
Laat heel ons leven een reflectie wezen
van wat U in een mensenleven doet.

Laat ons gelegenheden ernstig zoeken
Voor het beleven van wat Jezus zei:
"Wat gij aan één van deze minste broeders
doet, dat reken Ik als deed gij dat aan Mij."

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